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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

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THE

PRACTICAL WORKS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.," "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

IN TWENTY-THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. XVII.

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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

VOLUME XVII.

CONTAINING
SERMONS.

LONDON
PRINTED BY MILLS, JOWETT, AND MILLS,
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THE
VAIN RELIGION

OF THE
FORMAL HYPOCRITE,

AND
THE MISCHIEF OF AN UNBRIDLED TONGUE,

AS AGAINST RELIGION, RULERS, OR DISSENTERS,

DESCRIBED IN

SEVERAL SERMONS

PREACHED AT THE ABBEY IN WESTMINSTER,

BEFORE

MANY MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
MDCLX.:

AND

THE FOOL'S PROSPERITY

THE OCCASION OF HIS DESTRUCTION

A SERMON

PREACHED AT COVENT GARDEN.

BOTH PUBLISHED TO HEAL THE EFFECTS OF SOME HEARERS'
MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND MISREPORTS.

TO THE READER.

THOUGH God be not the author of sin, he knows why he permitteth it in the world. He will be no loser, and Satan shall be no gainer by it in the end. The malice of the devil and wicked men is, ordinarily, the destruction of the cause which they most desire to promote; and an advantage by accident to the cause and persons which they would root out from the earth. Were there no more to prove this than the instances of Joseph's brethren, of Pharaoh, and the murderers of our Lord, it were enough. We usually lose more by the flatteries of Satan and the World, than by their violence. If these hasty, coarse, unpolished sermons, shall prove beneficial to the souls of any, this also may come in among the lower rank of instances. If the devil had let me alone, they might have been cast aside, and no further molested him or his kingdom, for aught I know, than they did upon the preaching of them. But seeing he will needs, by malicious misreports, and slanders, kindle suspicion, and raise offence, against them and the author, let him take what he gets by it. He hath never yet got much from me, by violence, or by his foul-mouthed slanderous instruments: no, not when the impudence or multitude of their slanders have forced me to be silent, lest I trouble the reader, or misspend my time.

The first of these discourses, being intended to undeceive the formal hypocrite, and to call men from a vain, to a saving, serious religion, and to acquaint them that cry out against hypocrisy, where the hypocrite is to be found, it seems, provoked the ignorant or the guilty; in so much that the cry went, that I preached down all forms of prayer, and all government and order in the church: when there is not a syllable that hath any such sense; but it seems what I spoke against the carcass, was interpreted to be spoken against the body of religion.

The words of Mr. Bolton, and other divines, which I have

cited against the reproachers of serious piety, are added since the preaching of the rest, as being more fit to be presented here to the eye, than in the pulpit to the ear.

The petulancy of men on both extremes constrained me to add, “The Bridle for their Tongues.”

The second discourse, I understand, offended some few of the gallants, that thought they were too roughly handled; let them here peruse it, and better concoct it, if they please.

I only add this observation to the heirs of heaven, that are above this world, and live by faith.

Few rich men are truly religious; it is as hard for them to be saved, as for a camel to go through a needle’s eye. Yet rich men will every where be the rulers of the world, and so (as to outward protection or opposition) the judges in matters of religion. Judge, therefore, whether dominion and earthly reign be the portion of the saints (as Jewishly some of late imagine); and what usage we must ordinarily expect on earth! and what condition the church of Christ is like to be in to the end. As his kingdom, so ours, is not of this world. A low, despised, suffering state, is it that believers must ordinarily expect, and prepare for, and study to be serviceable in. If better (may I call it better) come, take it as a feast, and grudge not when the table is withdrawn; and look not it should be our every day’s fare. But yet, value the more highly those few of the rich, and great, and rulers, that are above this world, and devote their power and riches to the Lord, and are holy and heavenly in the midst of so great temptations and impediments.

The Lord teach us to use this transitory world as not over-using it, that we may never hear, “Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things. (Luke xvi. 25.) How shortly will they find themselves everlastingly undone, that made not sure of a more enduring portion! Reader, that thou mayest savingly remember these common but necessary, though much neglected, truths, is the end of these endeavours, and shall be the matter of my heart’s desire and prayers, while the Lord continueth me

His servant for the promoting the increase
and edification of his church,

November 15, 1660.

R. BAXTER.

Postscript. Readers, meeting, in his consideration of the Liturgy, with these following words of the Rev. D. Gauden, “I

cannot but commend the candour, justice, and integrity of Mr. Baxter, who lately professed to me, that he saw nothing in the Liturgy, which might not well bear a good construction, if men looked upon it as became Christians, with eyes of charity," I was sensible of the great respects of this learned and Reverend man; but, lest you misunderstand both him and me, I think it best to tell you more fully what were my words. Speaking for reformation of the Common Prayer Book, and an addition of other forms in scripture phrase, with liberty of choice, &c. I said, "That for the doctrine of the Common Prayer Book, though I had read exceptions against divers passages, I remembered not anything that might not receive a good construction, if it were read with the same candour and allowance, as we read the writings of other men." So that it was only the truth of the doctrine that I spoke of; against which I hate to be peevishly quarrelsome, when God hath blest this church so wonderfully, with a moderate and cautelous, yet effectual, reformation in matter of doctrine: the more pity is it that the very modes of worship and discipline should be the matter of such sharp and uncharitable discords, which must one day prove the grief of those that are found to have been the causes of it, and of the sufferings of the church on that occasion.

THE VAIN RELIGION OF THE FORMAL HYPOCRITE, &c.

JAMES i. 26.

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

BELoved hearers, I may suppose that we are all come hither to-day for the great end of our lives ; and to labour in that work for which we are created, preserved, instructed, and furnished with the helps and means of grace ; even to prepare for death that is coming to arrest us, and for the presence of our Judge, who stands at the door ; and to make our calling and election sure, that the glory of the saints may be our lot, when the world of the ungodly are cast into endless misery and despair. And I hope I may suppose that, in order to this end, you would gladly be acquainted with the causes of damnation, that you may avoid them ; with your greatest dangers, that you may escape them ; and with the hinderances of your salvation, that you may overcome them. When we read in the Gospel, that salvation is to be offered unto all, and no man is excepted or shut out, but such as shut out and except themselves ; and yet read that there are but few that find the “strait gate,” and the “narrow way,” and that the “flock is little” that shall have the “kingdom,” and that “many shall seek to enter that shall not be able,” (Matt. vii. 13, 14 ; Luke xii. 32, and xiii. 24.) we must needs conclude that some powerful enemy standeth in the way, that can cause the ruin of so many millions of souls ; but when we go further and find what rich preparations God hath made, and what means he hath used, and what abundant helps he offereth and affordeth to bring men to this blessed state of life, it forceth us to admire that any enemy can be so strong, as to frustrate so many, and such excellent means. But when we yet go further, and find that salvation is freely offered, and that the purchase is made by a Saviour to our hands, and

that hearty consent is the condition of our title, and nothing but our wilful refusal can undo us ; when we find that salvation is brought down to men's wills, and also what motives and convincing helps, and earnest persuasions, are appointed and used to make men willing ; we are then surprised with yet greater admiration, that any deceiver can be so subtle, or the heart of man can be so foolish, as to be drawn (in despite of all these means) to cast away the immortal crown that else no enemy could have taken from him. And now we discern the quality of our enemy, of our shares, of our danger, and of our duty ; it is not mere violence, but deceit, that can undo us ; not force, but fraud, that we have to resist. And were not the mind of a carnal man exceeding brutish, (while he seemeth wise for carnal things,) it were a thing incredible that so many men could, by all the subtlety of hell be drawn, in the day-light of the gospel, deliberately and obstinately to refuse their happiness, and to choose the open way of their damnation, and leave their friends lamenting their calamity, that might have mercy, and cannot be persuaded to consent.

That Satan is the great deceiver, and layeth the snare, and manageth the bait, we are all convinced ; that the world, and all our fleshly accommodations are the instrumental deceivers ; the snare, the bait which Satan useth, is also a thing that we all confess. But that beside the devil and the world, a reasonable creature should be his own deceiver, and that in a business of unspeakable, everlasting consequence ; and that religion itself, (a seeming religiousness that indeed is vain,) should be made by himself the means of his deceit, this is a mystery that is opened to you in my text, and requireth our most careful search and consideration.

When Satan and the World have wounded us by their deceits, religion is it that helpeth us to a cure. He that is deceived by pleasures and profits, and the vain glory of the world, must be undeceived and recovered by religion, or he must perish. But that religion itself should become his deceit, and the remedy prove his greatest misery, is the most stupendous effect of Satan's subtlety, and a sinner's fraudulency, and the saddest aggravation of his deplorable calamity. And yet, alas, this is so common a case, that where the gospel is preached, it seems to be Satan's principal game, and the highway to hell. There is no other name by which we can be saved, but by Jesus Christ, the only mediator between

sinful man and the offended Majesty ; and yet, what is there in all the world that is more abused to the deceiving of men's souls, than the name and grace of Jesus Christ? Men that may be saved by an effectual faith, are cheated and destroyed by false faith and presumption. The merciful nature of God is the ground-work of all the comforts of the godly ; and yet there is nothing that is more abused to the deceiving of men's souls ; that will profess that they trust in the mercies of God, while they are labouring to be miserable by the refusing and resisting the mercy that would save them. The free promises of the gospel do support true believers, but are abused to the deceiving of the presumptuous world. And so the Apostle telleth us that many do by their religion ; they will have a religion to deceive themselves, but not to save them.

It is the hypocrite that is the subject in my text, who is described by his double property. 1. That he seemeth to be religious. 2. That his obedience answereth not this seeming or profession ; the instance is given in the bridling of his tongue, because that was the point that the Apostle had some special reason to insist on, with those to whom he immediately directed his epistle. Though it is plain, in verses 22, 23, &c., that it is the whole work of obedience that he implieth, where he instanceth in this particular. The sin of the tongue which he specially intendeth to reprove, was the bitter reproaching of their brethren, upon the account of their differences in matters of religion, and the vilifying of others, and uncharitable passionate contentings and censures, upon pretence of knowing more than others ; as appeareth in the third chapter throughout.

The predicate is double ; one by way of supposition, viz., that this hypocrite doth but deceive his own heart ; the other by way of assertion, viz., that his religion is vain.

Whether *θρησκός*, and *θρησκεία* be fetched as far as from Orpheus, the Thracian, as Erasmus and many others imagine, is of no great moment to our understanding of the text, it being evident that it is the worshipping of God that is here meant by religion ; and it is men addicted to his worship that are called religious. The seeming, here spoken of, refers both to himself and others ; he that seemeth to himself to be religious, or is judged so by other men. By bridling the tongue, is meant, restraining it from evil speech. By deceiving himself, is meant the mistake of his judgment concerning the sincerity and acceptableness

and reward of his religion, and the frustrating of his own expectations hereupon ; his religion is said to be in vain, in that it shall not attain the ends of an unfeigned, true, religion, of which more anon. The sense of the text, then, is contained in these two propositions :

1. There is a seeming religiousness which is but self-deceiving, and will prove in vain.

2. Where sincere obedience doth not accompany the profession of religion, and, in particular, when such men bridle not their tongues, their religion is but vain, and self-deceiving.

These two being contained in the text, the former comprised in the latter, I shall handle them together, and show you, I. What this seeming religion is, and how it differeth from true religion. II. Wherein this self-deceiving by a seeming religion doth consist. III. Whence it is that men are so prone to this self-deceit. IV. In what respects this religion is vain, and why. V. And then we shall consider how to improve these truths by a due application.

I. Concerning the first I must show you, 1. What this seeming religion is made up of. 2. And what it wants, which maketh it delusory and vain.

In general, this vain religion is made up sometimes of all that, 1. A laudable nature or temperature of body ; 2. And good education, and excellent means ; 3. Assisted by the common workings of the spirit, can produce.

More particularly, 1. A vain religiousness may have a great deal of superficial opinionative knowledge, and so may have the truest religion for its object : the true doctrines of faith may be believed by a faith that is not true ; the hypocrite, as to the materials of his creed, may be orthodox ; when ignorance aboundeth, he may be a knowing man, and pity the ignorance of others ; when errors abound, he may be of the right opinion in religion, and speak much against the errors of the times, as one that is wiser than the giddy, heretical, sort of people ; he may “ know the will of God, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and be confident that he himself is a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hath the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. (Rom. ii. 18—20.) He may know as much materially as the upright may, and be able to convince gainsayers, and be a notable champion for the defending of the truth against the many adver-

saries that oppose it ; and so may be eminently useful in his generation.

2. He that is but religious in vain, may be frequent in the worshipping of God ; and may “ seek him daily, and delight to know his ways, and to approach him, and ask of him the ordinances of justice,” as if he were one of the people that “ did righteousness,” and “ forsook not the ordinances of their God.” (Isaiah lviii. 1, 2.) He may be oft in fasting, and punctual in keeping holy days and ceremonies, (as verse 3, Isaiah i. 12—15 ; Luke xviii. 11—13.) and exercise much severity on himself, “ after the commandments and doctrines of men, in things that have a show of wisdom, in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.” (Col. ii. 20—22, 13.) Though he be slow-paced in the right way, he is swift in his mistaken paths. Though he liketh not preciseness, zeal, and forwardness, in the spiritual works that God prescribeth, yet, when it comes to his own, or other men’s inventions, he will be religious and “ righteous over-much,” (Eccles. vii. 16.) and forward, to offer the sacrifice of a fool, that considereth not that he is but doing evil, while he thinks to please God with the sacrifice of his services, though he turn away his ear from an obedient hearing the word that should direct him. (Eccles. v. 1, 2 ; Prov. xxviii. 9.)

3. He that is but religious in vain, may see the evil of discord and divisions, and inveigh much against schismatics, and see the excellencies of unity and peace ; and therefore may join himself with the visible catholic church, and with the christians and congregations that are most for unity. There have always been hypocrites in the most orderly peaceable societies of believers, and still will be.

4. The self-deceiving hypocrite is oft-times very sensible of the evil of vertiginous mutability in religion ; and, therefore, he may be much resolved to continue what he is, and may cast many a jeer at the weather-cocks of the times, and the unconstaney and levity of ignorant or temporising men ; and may stand to his party and profession, against much opposition, as glorying in his constancy, and being ashamed to be thought a changeling, or such a turn-coat as others whom he merrily derideth.

5. An hypocrite that hath no other religion but delusory and vain, may observe the weaknesses of persons that are of lower education and parts, and may loath their indiscretion in

conference and behaviour, and their unhandsome expressions in prayer and other duties, and shake the head at them, as silly, contemptible, self-conceited fellows; and his heart may rise against their disorder, tautologies, and affectations: and it is like enough that hereupon he will jest at conceived prayer, or extemporate (as they call it), and bless himself as safe in his parrot-like devotions, because the same Spirit teacheth not fine words and rhetorical language to all that it teacheth to pray with unutterable sighs and groans, (Rom. viii. 26, 27;) though the Searcher of hearts (who is not delighted with compliments and set speeches) doth well understand the meaning of the Spirit.

5. The self-deceiving hypocrite doth frequently pretend to be a man of moderation in matters of religion, as distasting the hair-brained zealots, as he counteth them, that cannot be content to have their faith and religion to themselves before God, and to live and talk as others do, but must be singular, and make a stir with their religion, and turn the world upside down. The true zeal of the godly is usually distasteful to him, and the corrupt zeal of schismatical persons doth cause him to bless himself in his lukewarmness, and to take his most odious indifferency, and want of fervent love to God and his holy ways, to be his virtue.

6. This self-deceiving hypocrite doth frequently pretend to an exceeding great reverence in the managing of the outward part of worship; and to an extraordinary zeal about the circumstantialia of religion. He accounts them all schismatical and profane that place not as much of their religion as he doth in gestures and forms and other accidents of worship, acquainting us that the pharisaical temper in religion is natural, and will continue in the world.

7. If the temptation of the hypocrite lie on the other side, he can withdraw himself into some small or separating society, and place his religion in the singularity of his opinions, or in the strictness of the way and party that he owneth, and in his conceited ability in his conceived or ready expressions in prayer; and can cry out as much upon the formalist, as the formal hypocrite upon him, and glory in his zeal, as the other in his moderation. It is in the heart that hypocrisy hath its throne, from whence it can command the outward acts into any shapes that are agreeable to its ends; and can use materials of divers natures, as the fuel and nutriment of its malignity. And whatever party such are

joined to, and whatever way they have been trained up to, whether formality, or schism, or more regular, sober, equal, ways, in all of them their religion is but vain, and they do but deceive themselves by all.

8. The religion that is but delusory and vain, may be accompanied with much alms, and works of seeming justice, and charity. (Matt. vi. 1, 2; Luke xviii. 11, 12.) He may have many virtues called moral; and be a man of much esteem with others, even with the best and wisest, for his seeming wisdom, and piety, and justice. He may be no extortioner, unjust, adulterer, but as to gross sins seem blameless, (Luke xviii. 11, 12; Phil. iii. 6,) and be much in reproaching the scandalous lives of others, and thank God that he is none such. (Luke xviii. 11.)

9. He that hath but a vain religion, may, in his judgment, approve of saving grace, and like the more zealous, upright, self-denying, heavenly lives of others; and wish that he might die their death, and wish himself as happy as they, so it might be had on his own terms; and he may have some counterfeit of every grace, and think that it is true. (Numb. xxiii. 10; Jam. ii. 14, &c; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3; Mark v. 20.)

10. None will be more forward to call another hypocrite, than the hypocrite; nor to extol sincerity and uprightness of heart and life. And thus you see what this vain religion is made up with.

2. If you marvel what the hypocrite yet wants, that makes his religion delusory and vain, I shall now tell you, I hope, to your conviction and satisfaction.

1. For all his fore-mentioned religion, he wants the Spirit of Christ, to dwell as his sanctifier within him; and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his.” (Rom. viii. 9.) But because this is known by the effects, I add,

2. He wants that spiritual new birth, by which he should be made spiritual, as his first birth made him carnal. (John iii. 5, 6; Rom. viii. 6—8.) He is born of the will of the flesh, and of man, but not of God. (John i. 13.) From the first man Adam he is become a living soul, but by the second man Christ, the Lord from heaven, he is not yet quickened in the spirit. (1 Cor. xv. 45, 46.) He is not born again of the incorruptible seed, the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet. i. 23.) He is not yet saved by the washing of regeneration (save only as to the outward baptism) and by renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed by Christ

on all his members, that, being justified by his grace, they should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. iii. 5, 6.) They are not new creatures, old things being not past away, and all things with them become new: and therefore it is certain they are not in Christ. (2 Cor. v. 17.) They have not put off the old man with his deceitful lusts, and deeds, nor have they put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. (Eph. iii. 22—24; Col. iii. 9, 10.) They have but patched up the old unsanctified hearts, and smoothed over their carnal conversations with civility and plausible deportment, and so much religion as may cheat themselves, as well as blind the eyes of others: but they are strangers to the life of God, (Eph. iv. 18,) and never were made partakers of the divine nature, which all the children of God partake of, (2 Pet. i. 4,) nor of that holiness, without which none shall see the Lord. (Heb. xii. 14.)

3. Though he make a slight and customary confession of his sins, unworthiness, and misery, yet he is not kindly humbled at the heart, nor made truly vile in his own eyes, nor contrite and broken-hearted, nor emptied of himself, as seeing himself undone by his own iniquities, crying out unclean, and loathing himself for all his abominations, weary of his sin, and heavy-laden, as all must be that are fit for Christ. Read Isa. lvii. 15, and lxvi. 2; Psalm li. 17, and xxxiv. 18; Lev. xiii. 44, 45; Ezek. xxxvi. 31, and xx. 43, and vi. 9; Matt. xi. 28; Rom. vii. 24.

4. This man's religion must needs be vain, for he wanteth the life of faith itself, and heartily believeth not in Christ. He hath but an opinion of the truth of Christianity, through the advantage of his education and company; and thereupon doth call him selfa Christian, and heartlessly talk of the mystery of redemption as a common thing: but he doth not with a humble, broken heart, betake himself to Christ as his only refuge from the wrath of God, and everlasting misery, as he would lay hold on the hand of his friend, if he were drowning. The sense of the odiousness of sin, and of the damnation threatened by the righteous God, hath not yet taught him to value Christ, as he must be valued by such as will be saved by him. These hypocrites do but talk of Christ, and turn his name as they do their prayers, into the matter of a dry and customary form. They fly not to him as the only physician of their souls, in the feeling of their festering wounds: they cry

not to him as the disciples in the tempest, "Save, Master, we perish." They value him not practically, (though notionally they do,) as the pearl for which they must sell all. (Matt. xiii. 44—46.) Christ doth not dwell in his heart by faith, nor doth he long with all the saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. (Eph. iii. 17—19.) He counteth not all things loss for Christ, and the excellency of his knowledge; nor doth he count them as dung, that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ; (Phil. iii. 8—10;) nor can he truly say, that he desireth to know nothing but a crucified Christ, (1 Cor. ii. 2,) and that "the life that he now liveth in the flesh, he liveth by the faith of the Son of God, that loved him, and gave himself for him." (Gal. ii. 20.) He is not taken up with that admiration of the love of God in Christ, as beseems a soul that is saved by him from the flames of hell, and that is reconciled to God, and made an heir of life everlasting. He hath not understandingly, deliberately, seriously, and unreservedly, given up himself and all that he hath to Christ; and thankfully accepted Christ and life, as given on the gospel terms to him. This living effectual faith is wanting to the hypocrite, whose religion is vain.

5. This vain religion doth never practically show the soul the amiableness and attractive goodness of God, so far as to win the heart to a practical observation of him, and adhering to him, above all; nor so far as to advance him, above all the creatures, in the practical judgment, will, and conversation; nor doth he cause the soul to take him for its portion, and prefer his favour before all the world, and devote itself and all unto his interest and will, and give him the superlative and sovereign honour, both in heart and life. (Psalm lxiii. 3, and xxx. 5, and iv. 6, 7, and xvi. 5, and xvii. 4; Matt. x. 37.)

6. This vain religion is always without that serious belief of the life to come, which causeth the soul to take it for its happiness and treasure, and there to set its desires and its hopes, and to make it his principal care and business to attain it, and to make all the pleasures and profits and honours of the world to stoop to it, as preferring it before them all. (Matt. vi. 20, 21, and ver. 33; Luke xviii. 22, 23, and xiv. 33; Col. iii. 1—5; Phil. iii. 18—20.) The hypocrite taketh heaven but for a reserve, and as a lesser evil than hell, and seeks it but in the

second place, while his fleshly pleasures and interest have the pre-eminence, and God hath no more but the leavings of the world; and he serveth him but with so much as his flesh can spare.

7. This vain religion consisteth principally in external observances. If he be a formalist that hath it, his religion lieth in his beads and prayer-books, in going so oft to church, and keeping holy days and fasting days, and saying over such and such words, and using such and such gestures and ceremonies, and submitting to church orders, and crying down sectaries and preciseness, and jeering at the simplicity of plain-hearted Christians that never learned the art of dissimulation. Their religion is but a pack of compliments, a flattering of God, as if they would mock him with cap and knee who will not be mocked; (Gal. vi. 7;) while they draw near to him with their lips, their hearts are far from him. (Matt. xv. 7—9.) They wash the outside, and pay tithe of all, and give some alms, and forbear disgraceful sins, which would make them be esteemed ungodly among men. (Matt. xv. 2, 3; Mark vii. 4, 8; Matt. xxiii. 25, 26, &c., vi. 1, 4, 6, &c.; Isa. i. 11—14, lviii. 1, 2.) But these self-deceivers are strangers to the inward spiritual work of holiness: their hearts are not busy in the worship of God, by fervent desire and exercise of other graces, while their tongues are put into an artificial pace, and they are acting the part of men that seem to be religious.

If they be cast into the sectarian mould, they place their religion in the strictness of their principles and parties, and in contending for them, and in their affected fervour, and ability to speak and pray extempore: but the humble, holy, inward workings of the soul toward God, and its breathings after him, and the watch that it sets over the heart, this hypocrite is much a stranger to.

If he be brought up among the orthodox in well-ordered churches, he placeth his religion in the holding of the truth, and taking the right side, and submitting to right order, and using God's ordinances: but the most of an upright man's employment is at home, within him; to order his soul, and exercise grace, and keep down sin, and keep out of the world, and keep under the flesh and carnal self, and do the inward part of duty; and he is as truly solicitous about this as about the outward works, and contenteth not himself to have said his prayers, unless, indeed, his heart have prayed; nor to have heard, unless

he have profited, or heard with obediential attention : and he makes conscience of secret duties, as well as of those that are done in the sight of men ; but this the hypocrite comes not up to, to trade in the internal spiritual part.

8. The religion that is vain is without an universal hatred of known sin, and an actual conquering of it, so far as to live out of gross sin, which some call mortal, and to be weary of infirmities, and to be truly desirous to be rid of all ; and to be willing to use God's means against it. Thus it is with the sincerely religious, but not with these hypocrites that deceive themselves. (John iii. 19, 20 ; Rom. vii. 24 ; Luke xiii. 3, 5 ; Rom. viii. 1—14 ; Gal. vi. 7, 8.) The hypocrite hath not only some particular sin, which all his religion makes him not willing to see to be a sin, or to forsake ; but his very state is sinful in the main, by the predominancy of a selfish carnal interest and principle ; and he is not willing of close plain dealing, much less of the diligent use of means himself to overcome that sin, because he loveth it.

9. This vain religion is not accompanied by an unfeigned love to a life of holiness, which every true believer hath ; delighting to meditate in the law of God, with a practical intention to obey it, and delighting in the inward exercise of grace, and outward ordinances as advantages hereunto ; desiring still more of the grace which he hath tasted, and grieving that he knoweth, and trusteth, and loveth, and feareth, and obeyeth God so little, and loving to reach higher, to know, and love, and fear him more. (Psalm i. 2, and cxix. 1—5, 9, 10, &c ; Heb. xii. 14 ; 2 Peter iii. 11 ; Matt. vii. 13, 14.) But the self-deceiver either hath a secret dislike of this serious diligence for salvation, and loving God with all the soul and might, (because he is conscious that he reacheth it not himself,) or, at least, he will not be brought to entertain any more than will stand with his carnal ends.

10. A vain religion doth not so far reveal the excellency of Christ's image in his servants, as to cause an entire love to them as such ; and to delight in them above the most splendid and accomplished persons that are strangers to the life of grace, and so far to love them as, when Christ requireth it, to part with our substance, and hazard ourselves for their relief. Thus do the truly religious. (Psalm xvi. 2. and xv. 4 ; 1 John iii. 14 ; Matt. x. 40 ; xi. 42 ; and xxv. 34, 35, 40, 42, 45, 46.) But the hypocrite either secretly hateth a heavenly, holy life, and, consequently the people that are such, (because they seem to con-

damn him by overgoing him, and differing from him ; or, at least, he only superficially approveth of them, but will forsake both Christ and them in trial, rather than forsake his earthen god. I have now showed you what the self-deceiver wants, in which you may see sufficient reason why his religion is but vain.

II. We are next to show you how these hypocrites do deceive themselves, and wherein their self-deceit consisteth. It may seem strange that a man of reason should do such a thing as this, when we consider that truth is naturally the object of the understanding, and that all men necessarily love themselves, and therefore love what they know to be simply good for them. How then can any man that hath the use of reason be willing to be deceived, yea, and be his own deceiver, and that in matters of unspeakable consequence ! But it is not as falsehood, nor as deceit, that they desire it, but as it appeareth necessary to the carnal ease and pleasure which they desire.

The way by which they deceive their own hearts consisteth in these following degrees :—

1. The hypocrite resisteth the spirit of grace, and rejecteth the mercies offered in the gospel ; and so, by his refusal, is deprived of a part in Christ, and of the life of grace, and the hopes of glory which were tendered to him.

2. But withal, he is willing of so much of this mercy as consisteth with his sinful disposition and carnal interest : he is willing enough to be happy in general, and to be saved from hell-fire, and to be pardoned, and to have such a heaven as he hath framed a pleasing imagination of.

3. And therefore he maketh him up a religion of so much of Christianity as will stand with his pleasures, profits, and reputation in the world, that so he may not be left in despair of being saved, when he must leave the world that he most loved. The cheap and the easy parts of Christianity, and those that are most in credit in the world, and that flesh and blood have least against, these he will cull out from among the rest, and make him a religion of, passing by the dearer and more difficult and spiritual parts.

4. Having gone thus far, he persuadeth his own heart that this kind of religion which he hath patched up and framed to himself is the true religion, the faith, the hope, the charity, the repentance, the obedience, to which salvation is promised ; and that he is a true Christian, notwithstanding his defects ; and

that his spots are but such as are consistent with grace; and that his sins are but pardoned infirmities; and that he hath part in Christ, and the promises of life, and shall be saved, though he be not of the preciser strain. When he committeth any sin, he confidently imagineth that his confession and his wishing it were undone again, when he hath had all the pleasure that sin can give him, is true repentance; and that, as a penitent, he shall be forgiven: and thus, while he thinketh himself something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. (Gal. vi. 3.) He hath a counterfeit of every grace of God; a counterfeit faith, and hope, and love, and repentance, and zeal, and humility, and patience, and perseverance: and these he will needs take to be the very life and image of Christ, and the graces themselves that accompany salvation.

5. Having got this carcass of religion without the soul, he makes use of all those things to confirm him in his deceit, which are appointed to confirm true Christians in their faith and hope. When he reads or thinks of the infinite goodness, love, and mercy of God, he thinks God could not be so good and merciful, if he should refuse to save all such as he. When he readeth of the undertaking and sacrifice of Christ, and how he is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, he confidently, hence, concludeth that a Saviour so gracious, that hath done and suffered so much for sinners, cannot condemn all such as he. When he readeth of the extent and freeness of grace in the promises of the gospel, he concludeth that these promises belong to him, and that grace could not be so free and so extensive, if it did shut out all such as he. When he observeth the mercies of God upon his body, in his friends, and health, and credit and prosperity, he concludeth that surely God loveth him as a child, in that he dealeth so fatherly with him. If he suffer adversity, he thinks that it is fatherly chastisement of God, and therefore proveth him to be his son, and that he shall have his good things in the world to come, because he hath his evils here. If he suffer any thing for a good cause, or a cause that he taketh to be good, he taketh himself to be a confessor, and marked out for life eternal. If he give any considerable alms, he applieth all the promises to himself that are made to those that are truly charitable, though he giveth but the leavings of the flesh, and giveth but on common compassions, or for applause, or for some common end, and not as to Christ whom he honoureth in his members, as one that hath resigned all unto

him. If he pray, from the lips only, or only for pardon, and such other mercies as flesh itself would be glad to have, without the inexpressible groans of the spirit for spiritual mercies, (Rom. viii. 26,) he presently applieth all the promises to himself that are made to the upright that call upon God: and thus love, mercy, and Christ himself, are abused by him, to this damning work of self-deceit.

6. Moreover, he makes use of all the ordinances of God, to the deceiving of his own heart. The outward part of baptism persuades him that he is inwardly regenerate. He receiveth the Lord's supper that he may confirm his presumption, and increase his self-deceit, as the godly receive it to confirm and increase their saving faith. He joineth with the church in those prayers and praises that are fitted to the true believer's state that he may thence more confidently deceive his own heart, with the conceit that he is a true believer. And thus he turneth the bread of life, and all the helps and means of grace, to the strengthening of his sin, and the furthering of his perdition.

7. Moreover, this miserable self-deceiver does usually get into such company as may further his self-deceit, and maketh use of them to that end. If he get into any holy, well-ordered church of Christians, it is that, by his outward communion with the saints, he may seem to himself to have inward communion with them. If he get among able godly ministers, and other judicious Christians, and finds that he is well esteemed of by them, he is confirmed hereby in his presumption and self-deceit: when, alas! we must, in charity, judge of men as they profess and seem, and leave the infallible judgment of the heart to God. Usually, this self-deceiving hypocrite doth associate with some carnal or factious men, with whom he makes himself a party: and such will smooth him up, and make a saint of him, either because they are as bad themselves, and dare not condemn him, lest they condemn themselves, or because they are flatterers and daubers, or men that were never themselves acquainted with those saving operations of the spirit which he wants, or because they are partial to one of their own faction. And thus a formal hypocrite may be stroked by formalists, and a schismatical hypocrite may be soothed up by those of his own sect (as lamentable experience telleth us that such do) to the increase of their pernicious self-deceit.

Yet more than so; if these hypocrites fall in company with the notoriously profane, from them they will fetch some con-

firmation of their self-deceit : when they hear them swear and curse, and rant, and see them drunk, they secretly with the Pharisee rejoyce and say, “ I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as this publican.” And this is one reason why such hypocrites are well content to have some servants in their families, or some neighbours or company about them that are notoriously profane, that their deluded consciences, considering that they are more civil and religious themselves, may hence gather comfort, that they are the servants of God, and in a state of grace.

Hence also it is, that those of them that go on the schismatical side, do purposely go into separated societies, that, by withdrawing from so many, and (as they speak) coming out from among them, they may seem to themselves to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and to be of the little flock that shall have the kingdom. This is the use that self-deceivers make of their companions.

8. Moreover, the hypocrite confirmeth his self-deceit, by observing the great numbers of ungodly persons, worse than he, that are in the world : this makes him think that God should be unmerciful, and heaven be empty, if all such as he should be shut out : the damnation of so many seemeth so incredible to him, that it much increaseth his confidence and self-deceit.

9. And he deceiveth himself also by a mis-observing and mis-applying the faults and infirmities of the servants of the Lord, and the scandalous lives of many hypocrites like himself. When he readeth of Noah’s drunkenness and incest, and David’s adultery and murder, and Peter’s denial of his Master, with cursing and swearing, he considereth not how much these singular actions were contrary to the scope of their lives, nor by what serious repentance they did rise, and do so no more ; but he hence concludeth that sure he is in a state of grace, that hath no such heinous sins as these : though indeed he hath more heinous continually within him, (even a love of the world and pleasure above God, a secret root of unbelief, a servitude to the flesh, &c.) when he seeth any about him that profess the fear of God, prove hypocrites or apostates, or fall into any scandalous sin, he strengtheneth his presumption by it, and concludeth that this profession of greater holiness than he himself hath, is but hypocrisy ; and that he is as good as those that seem more devout, though he make not so much ado with his religion : or at least that he shall be saved, when those are so bad that are accounted better : if there be but a Ham in the

Ark and family of Noah, an Ishmael in Abraham's house, an Esau in Jacob's, an Absalom in David's, a Judas among the disciples of Christ, these self-deceivers will thence fetch matter for their own delusion and perdition, as if the rest were all as bad, or sanctification were not necessary to salvation.

10. The self-deceiver also is confirmed in his presumption, by taking to himself the comforts that ministers hold forth, for truly humbled, upright souls, that are apt to be too much disquieted and cast down. Our congregations are mixed of godly and ungodly, and broken-hearted and hard-hearted, dejected and self-confident sinners (besides all those that are well settled in their spiritual peace). And as we cannot tell how to tell the wicked of their misery, nor open the hypocrite's self-deceit, but the self-suspecting humbled soul, will mis-apply it to themselves, and be more dejected by it, and say, it is thus with me; so we cannot tell how to comfort the distressed, and clear up the evidences of a drooping soul, but the presumptuous hypocrite will lay hold upon it, and think that it belongs to him. Every comfortable book or scripture that he readeth, and every comfortable sermon or discourse which he heareth, is abused to increase his self-deceit.

11. It increaseth the hypocrite's self-deceit, when he findeth some partial reformation in himself, and that he hath mended many things that were amiss; this he takes for a true conversion, and thinks that the civilizing and smoothing of his life, the change of his opinion, and the taking up a form of godliness, are true sanctification; and that he is not the man that once he was, and therefore is in a safe condition. Though, alas! he hath never yet known by experience the new heart, the new ends, the new resolutions, affections, and conversation of a saint.

12. Lastly, he deceiveth himself by misunderstanding the nature of hypocrisy. Because he perceiveth not that he is a gross dissembler, but meaneth as he speaks, so far as he goes, therefore, he thinks that he is no hypocrite; whereas, besides the gross hypocrite that knoweth that he doth dissemble, and only deceiveth others, there are also close hypocrites, that know not they are hypocrites, but deceive themselves. And these are they that my text here speaks of, when it saith, "He deceiveth his own heart." It is hypocrisy (to seem better than one is, and to profess to be a sincere Christian when he is none,) though he confidently think that he is what he professeth himself to be.

III. But what is it that can move a reasonable creature to be wilfully guilty of such self-deceit in the day-light of the gospel, when he hath so much help to see his way?

Answer. 1. They are first deceived by the vanities of the world, and the pleasures of sin, before they deceive themselves by their religion. Their religious self-deceiving is but subservient to their fleshly servitude, and the world's deceit. They are carnal from the birth, (for that which is born of the flesh only, is but flesh, John iii. 6,) and custom in sinning fixeth and increaseth their sinful disposition. Their hearts are engaged to their worldly accommodations, and to their vain glory, and the things that please the flesh; they are willing slaves to their concupiscence. And therefore they cannot admit of that religion which would deprive them of that which they most dearly love. Christ speaks too late to them. They tell him they are promised already. Their affections are pre-engaged: sin hath taken up the chiefest rooms: and the heart that loveth sensuality and prosperity best, cannot love God best too: for it can have but one best. The nature of true sanctification is to take down the darling of a carnal heart, and to cross it in its dearest loves, and to lay that at our feet that before was our treasure, and to tame the body, and to bring it into subjection, which before was in the throne. The motions of such a change will not be acceptable, till they are made so effectual as to cause that change: the command will be unpleasant, till the heart be suited to the nature of the command. He that seeth what care and labour there is to gather a worldly treasure, and what a stir is made in the world about it, can never expect that all this should be vilified and despised at a word, and that any doctrine (how true and heavenly soever) can be welcome to these worldly men, that would debase their glory, and embitter their delights, and make their idol seem but dung. The doctrine of Christ would take the old heart out of their bodies: and they will not easily leave their hearts. It doth not only command the drunkard to live soberly, and the glutton temperately, and the lascivious filthy sinner chastely, and the proud person humbly, and the covetous to live contentedly and liberally; but it commandeth the hearty forsaking of all for the sake of Christ, (Luke xiv. 33,) and the accounting them but as loss and dung that we may win him, (Phil. iii. 7—9.) and mortifying of that flesh which before we daily studied to please, (Col. iii. 4—5,) and the crucifying of its affections and lusts,

(Gal. v. 24,) and the denial even of ourselves. (Luke ix. 23, 24.) And for a carnal mind to love and yield to such commands, were no other than to cease to be a carnal mind. All this is largely expressed by the Apostle, (Rom. viii. 1, &c.) They that are in Christ Jesus, “walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit—For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God—For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye then through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

You see here why it is that the self-deceiver will not entertain the power of godliness, nor be religious seriously according to the true intent of the gospel, and the nature of Christianity, even because he is engaged to a contrary object, and hath another game in chase, which he will not leave, and which true religion requireth him to leave, and will not give him leave to follow. And therefore he parteth with the religion which would have parted him from that which he will not part with.

2. But withal, he is all this while under the threatenings of the law of God, and conscience is ready to bear witness against him; and betwixt law and conscience, the poor wretch is as the corn between two mill-stones; he would be ground to powder, and tortured with terrors before his time, if he had not some opiate, or intoxicating medicine, to ease him by deceiving him, and to abate his fears, and to quiet his conscience as long as a palliate cure will serve turn. So that here are two things for which the self-deceiving hypocrite is fain to fall into his vain religion: the one is, that it may be a cloak to the sin which he will needs keep: the other is, that it may save him from the terrors and disquietments that for this sin his conscience would else afflict him with. A belief that he may be saved, for all his sin, is the relief that he hath against the terrors of the law of God. He therefore chooseth out such parcels of religion as may serve him for this use, and yet will not separate him from the sin that he delighteth in. The power of godliness will not consist with his covetous, proud, or fleshly life; but the form and outside will. And therefore this

regeneration, and mortification, and self-denial, and subjection to the whole will of God, and this heavenly-mindedness and watching the heart, and walking with God, and living above the trifles of this world, and making it the chief business to prepare for another ; this kind of religion, which is religion indeed, he cannot (because he will not) entertain. This is the strait gate and narrow way, that few men find. Here he must be excused. God is no God for him upon these terms ; (and he can not and will not be his God upon any other terms ;) Christ is no Christ for him unless he will excuse him from this trouble, and bear with him in his carnal course ; that is, unless he will be indeed no Christ to him. Heaven is no heaven for him, unless he may pass to it through prosperity and sin ; and unless he may have it without the trouble of a holy life ; that is, unless God will be unjust or false, and heaven cease to be heaven, and God cease to be God.

But yet these men are convinced that God is their rightful governor, and that, indeed, they should love him, and serve him with all their heart and might, and that without true religion and godliness there is no salvation. To be irreligious and profane, they know is a state that can afford no comfort, or shelter from the wrath of God ; and therefore some religion they must have : they are not able to endure the thoughts of lying under the curse of God. To conclude themselves to be utterly graceless, and the children of the devil, and in a state of condemnation, is so terrible, that they are not able to endure it : then every sermon they hear would torment them, and every chapter they read would torment them ; and their pleasures would all be imbittered to them, and nothing that they enjoy in all the world would quiet and content them. (No, nor shall do long.) And therefore they must needs take up some religion, to quiet them for a little while, and to make them hope, that for all their sins, they are not so bad, nor in so dangerous a case as preachers tell them ; some religion they must needs have for fear of being damned : a sound and serious religion they will not have, because they love the world and sin, which it would deprive them of ; and therefore they patch up a vain religion, composed of so much truth and duty as will stand with their prosperity and pleasures : which will not save them, but sufficeth to deceive them.

Two parts make up this self-deceiving frame, as consistent with their sins : the one is the formal, outward, easy, cheap

part of duty to God and man in their practice ; leaving out the spiritual, inward, difficult, dear, self-denying part. The other is, the strictest parts of religion in bare opinion and notion, while they shut it out of their hearts and lives. For both these may stand with a sensual, worldly, selfish life. He may read or say his prayers, and be a worldling still : he may come to church, and, with the greatest ceremony and seeming reverence, receive the sacrament, and bow before the Lord his Maker, and yet be sensual or a worldling still. And he may be of the strictest party or opinion, and notionally condemn all sin, and justify the most holy life, and yet be sensual and worldly still. And therefore this much he may be persuaded to take up, to save himself from the lashes of his conscience. And so the use of the hypocrite's religion is to be a screen betwixt him and the flames of wrath, that would scorch him too soon, if he were of no religion : and to be to him as a tent or penthouse to keep off the storms that would fall upon him, while he is trading for the world, and working for the flesh. His religion is but the sheath of his guilty conscience, to keep it from wounding him, and cutting his fingers, while they are busy in the brutish service of his lusts. It is but a glove to save his skin, when he hath to do with the nettles and thorns of the threatenings of God, and the thoughts of vengeance, that else would rack his guilty soul. It is but as his upper garment, to save him from a storm, and then to be laid by as an unnecessary burden, when he is at home. The hypocrite's religion is but as his shoe : he can tread it in the dirt, so it will but save his foot from galling. As a man that hath an unquiet scolding wife, is fain to speak her fair by flatteries, lest he should have no rest at home ; or as a thief is fain to cast a crust to the dog that barketh at him, to stop his mouth ; so is an ungodly, sensual person fain to flatter his conscience with some kind of religiousness, and to stop his mouth with some kind of devotion and seeming righteousness, that may deceive him into a belief that he is a child of God. Religion is the sovereign in a gracious soul, and the master in an upright conscience, and ruleth above all worldly interests. But with the unregenerate, it is but an underling and servant, that must do no more than the flesh and the world will give consent to ; and is regarded no further than for mere necessity ; and when it hath done the work which the hypocrite appointed it, it is dismissed and turned out of doors. God is acknowledged and confessed by the hypo-

crite, but not as God. Christ is believed in and accepted, but not as Christ, but as an underling to the world, and a journeyman to do some job of work for a distressed, wrangling, conscience; or as an unwelcome physician to give them a vomit when they have taken some extraordinary surfeit of sensual delight. When they have fallen into great affliction, or into any foul, disgraceful sin, then, perhaps, they take up their prayer-books, or call upon Christ, and seem devout and very penitent. But their piety is blown over with the storm. The effect ceaseth with the cause. It was not the love of God, or of his holy ways and service, that set them upon their devotions, but some tempest of adversity, or shipwreck of their estates, or friends, or consciences; and when the winds are laid, and the waves are still, their devotion ceaseth with their danger.

3. Add hereunto (to show you the reason of the hypocrite's self-deceit) that he is one that never practically saw the amiableness of holiness in itself; and never had a heart that was touched with the love of it by the spirit of holiness; and therefore he taketh it but for mere necessity; and therefore he taketh up no more than he thinks is of necessity to save him from damnation, when he can live in the pleasures of the world no longer. God never had his heart. He had rather be about his sports or worldly business, if he durst, and thought he could be so excused. He loveth a pair (pack) of cards, or dice, or a harlot, or his ambitious designs and honours, better than he loveth the Holy Scriptures, and the heavenly discourse or contemplation of the life to come. And therefore he will have no more religion than needs he must, because he taketh it not for love, but need. The matters of the world and the flesh are his diet, and his extraordinary successes and prosperity are his feast; and therefore he will take as much of them as he can and dare: but religion is but his physic, and therefore he will take it as little and seldom as he dare. Had he but seen the face of God by faith, and had he but the heart of a true believer, that is suited by holiness to the holy works that God commandeth, as the heart of a true friend is suited to the will of him whom he loveth, he would then be no longer religious against his will, and consequently in vain; but he would think the most pure and heavenly mind, and life, and the highest degree of love and holiness, to be the best and most desirable state for his soul, as every true believer doth. Had this hypocrite any true love to God, as he deceitfully pretends to have, he would love

his image, and word, and ways; and then he would love best that kernel and marrow of religion, that life and soul of worship and obedience, which now he favoureth not, but shifteth off as a needless, or tedious, or unattainable thing.

The nature and use of these hypocrites' religion, is to save them from religion: they carry an empty gilded scabbard, accusing the sword of a dangerous keenness, as a thing more perilous than necessary to their use. When they seem most zealous, they are but serving God that they may be excused from serving him; and they worship him on purpose to shift off his worship. They offer him the lips, that the heart may be excused; and compliment him with cap and knee, that they may excuse themselves from real holiness: they offer him the empty purse for payment, and tender him a sacrifice of husks and shells, and lifeless carcasses: they will abound in the shadow and ceremony, that they may be excused from the spiritual life and substance. Alas! that dead-hearted hypocrite that sits there, and heareth all this, is so great a stranger to the opening of the heart, and the deep entertainment of saving truth, and to the savoury relish of the searching, healing, quickening passages of holy doctrine, and to the thankful welcoming of an offered Christ, and to the lookings and longings of the soul after God, and to the serious desires, and hopes, and labours of a gracious soul for life eternal, that he is idle, asleep, and dead as to all this spiritual work, and if he had not some customary service to perform, and some ceremonies or external task to do, and some bodily worship to be employed in, he would find little or nothing to do in the assemblies, but might sit here as a brute, or as one of a strange language, that comes but to see and to be seen. And therefore if there be not somewhat more suitable to him than power and spirituality, it seemeth as no worship to the formal hypocrite. It is the pretty jingles and knacks of wit, and the merry jeers at the preciser sort, or some scraps of Greek and Latin authors, or shreds of fathers and philosophy, or at best an accurate, well-set speech, that makes the sermon acceptable to this hypocrite's ears. It is not spirit and life within him that brought him hither, nor is it spirit and life that he favoureth, and that he came for. And therefore it is that this sort of hypocrites are usually most impatient of a misplaced word, or of a worship performed in the primitive simplicity. If a man deliver the Lord's supper but as Christ did, and receive it but as the Apostles did, or serve God but

as the churches in their days, he will seem unreverent, and slovenly, and sordid to these self-deceiving formalists. They are set upon excess of ceremonies, because they are defective in the vital parts, and should have no religion if they had not this. All sober Christians are friends to outward decency and order ; but it is the empty self-deceiver that is most for the unwarrantable inventions of men, and sticketh in the bark of God's own ordinances, that taketh the garments for the man, and useth the worship of God, but as a masque or puppet-play, where there is great doings, with little life, and to little purpose. The chastest woman will wash her face ; but it is the harlot, or wanton, or deformed, that will paint it. The soberest and the comeliest will avoid a nasty or ridiculous habit, which may make them seem uncomely, where they are not ; but a curious dress, and excessive care, doth signify a crooked or deformed body, or a filthy skin, or, which is worst, an empty soul, that hath need of such a covering. Consciousness of such greater want, doth cause them to seek these poor supplies. The gaudiness of men's religion is not the best sign that it is sincere. Simplicity is the ordinary attendant of sincerity. It hath long been a proverb, " the more ceremony, the less substance ; and the more compliment, the more craft."

And yet if it were only for want of inward true religion that the hypocrite setteth up his shows, it were bad enough, but not so bad as with most of them, or all, it is. For it is an enmity to religion that accompanieth their religion. As in lapsed man, the body, that was before the soul's obedient attendant, is become its master, and the enemy of its perfection and felicity ; so, in the carnal religion of the hypocrite, the outside, which should be the ornament and attendant of the inward spiritual part, hath got the mastery, and is used in an enmity against the more noble part which it should serve ; and much more are his humane inventions and mixtures thus destructively employed. His bellows do but blow out the candle, under pretence of kindling the fire. He sets the body against the soul, and sometime the cloathing against both. He useth forms to the destruction of knowledge, and quenching of all seriousness and fervour of affection. By preaching, he destroyeth preaching, and prayeth till prayer is become no prayer, but the image or carcass of prayer at the best. And useth his words to the destruction of the due principle, sense, and ends. Having still his carnal self for his end, he preacheth, and

prayeth, and serveth God in a manner that seems most suitable to his end ; so that it is not God's means that he useth, when he useth them, but his own ; nor doth he indeed worship God, while he seems to worship ; nor is indeed religious, but seems religious. It is materially, perhaps, God's work that he doth, and his means he useth, but formally they are his own, and not God's at all ; when we meet with abundance of our people that are most nimble in their accustomed forms, that know not what religion or christianity is, nor who Christ is, nor almost any of the substance of the gospel, it assures us that it is easy to be infidels with christian expressions in their mouths, and that it is easier to teach a parrot to speak, than to be a man. As their bodies are but the prisons, or dungeons of their souls, so their formal words and ceremonies are used to be the prison and dungeon, or rather the grave, of true devotion. Their religion is excessively laced, but so scant of cloth, that it covereth not their nakedness, nor keeps them warm. It is always winter with the hypocrite in his formal lifeless services, and yet sometime his leaf doth never fall. He is like the box-tree that knows no fruit, and yet its leaves are always green. Wherever his heart is, the formalist's prayers are always ready, for his prayer-book or memory is still the same ; he can say them between sleeping and waking in his bed, and as he is dressing or washing him, and the interposition of a friend, or some intervenient word or business, is so small a rub, that it seldom puts him out of his way. Though he cannot make spiritual his common business, he can make his spiritual business common. Though he have not the art, the heart, to manage his trade or worldly business with a holy and heavenly mind, yet he can manage his holiest businesses with such a mind as he doth his trade. If you would know whether he be praying or playing, preaching or prating, serving God, or himself and the flesh, you must not search deep for an internal difference, but must discern it by the show and sound of words. He is not one of them that are above ordinances, as turning every day into a sabbath, and every thought into a prayer, and every morsel into a sacrament ; but he cannot turn every sabbath into a common day, and every prayer into common thoughts, and every sacrament into common food ; and therefore that which is holy to others, is to him unclean. Hypocrisy is a natural popery ; it filleth the places of worship with images. Instead of prayer, there is

the image of prayer; and instead of preaching, hearing, praising God, and other parts of worship, there is the image of worship; and instead of Christians, believers, saints, (and I was going to say, of men,) there are so many images of these. Church images are usually handsomely adorned, and placed in a posture of reverence and devotion, and so are they. But life they have none, but merely natural. They are seeing, hearing, speaking images, but images they are. They have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not; hearts, but understand not.

And they are enemies to the life and power of religion, in others as well as in themselves. The publicans were not so bitter persecutors of Christ, as the Scribes and Pharisees were. He can hate and reproach the faithful by the Spirit, though he cannot, or will not, pray by the Spirit; for he hath the spirit of malignity, though not the spirit of supplication. He can rail without book, though he cannot pray without book. Were it as natural and easy to be a saint, as to scorn a saint, and to worship God in spirit and in truth, as to hate such worship, the man might become a saint yet before he dies. But his vain religion changeth not his nature, and therefore destroyeth not his serpentine enmity against the holy nature and practice of believers, though perhaps the times may stop his hissing, or hinder him from putting forth his sting. These spiritual worshippers and heavenly, diligent sort of Christians, that make it the main business of their lives to honour God, and save their souls, are usually the greatest eyesore of the formalist. Many a disdainful thought he hath of them, and many a bitter gird he gives them: forgetting that their Redeemer heareth all, who is coming "with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude, 14, 15.) The humble, spiritual, heavenly believers, are they that condemn the hypocrite by their lives; were it not for them, he could easily believe that he is a saint himself, and should undoubtedly be saved. He looketh on the openly ungodly but as the beauty-spots of the assemblies that serve to set out the piety of such as he. If he saw no better than himself, he could easily take himself for one of the best. Every dotted post and glow-worm would be more resplendent and observable in the absence of all greater lights. They hate the sun for making

their candle to be but a scarce-discerned flame. The life of a holy, heavenly person doth as much gall the conscience of the hypocrite, and proclaim his misery, and bear a terrible witness against him, as a searching, powerful sermon doth. And therefore, as it is a vexation to him to live under such a searching minister as is always rubbing on the galled place, and causing conscience to torment him before his time ; so is it a trouble to him to live among these heavenly believers, and to be daily condemned by their lives, and galled by their re-proving practices.

By this time you may see the reason and use of the hypocrite's religion ; the self-denying part of religion he cannot abide ; the life and power of it is above him, and seems against him ; the fears of hell and gripes of conscience he cannot abide ; some hopes of heaven he must have awhile to keep him from despair, and therefore he must have some religion to deceive his heart, and maintain his hopes. And therefore he fitteth his religion to these uses, and takes up with so much as will not much trouble him, or undo him in the world, or absolutely forbid his sinful pleasures. And though sometime he be afraid lest the power and life of godliness will prove necessary to his salvation, yet he revives his fainting hopes by running for comfort to his lifeless form. The rest he hath no mind to, and therefore will hope to be saved without it, till his deceit have brought him to the place of desperation, where is no hope. As a merchant in a storm is loth to cast his goods into the sea, and therefore hopes he may save himself and them, till he and they are drowned together ; or as a patient that abhors his physic, or loves some forbidden thing too well, is hoping still that he may escape, though he use the thing he loves, and forbear the medicine which he loathes till he be past remedy, and he consents too late ; so is it often with the self-deceiving hypocrite : he loves not this strict, and holy, and heavenly, and self-denying life, and therefore he will hope that God will save him without it, as long as he is religious in a way that he accounts more wise, and safe, and moderate, and comely, and suited to the nature and infirmity of man. These are his hopes, and to deceive his heart, by maintaining these, it is that he is religious, till either grace convert, or justice apprehend him, and his hopes and he are swallowed up by convincing flames and utter desperation.

IV. We are next to show you in what respect it is that this religion is called vain. And first, negatively, it is not vain to his own carnal ends, but to the true ends of religion.

1. He intendeth by it the quieting of his own accusing conscience, and the keeping up his hopes of salvation, and keeping off the terrors of the Lord, and so consequentially the deceiving of his own heart ; and to these ends it is not in vain. Here he sitteth as quietly as if all were well between God and him, and heareth the threatenings as securely as if they concerned not him at all, and applieth the promises as boldly as if he were one of the heirs of promise ; you would little think that this man must shortly be cast into utter darkness, from the presence of the Lord, and have “ his portion with the hypocrites.” (Matt. xxiv. 51.) His everlasting horrors appear not now to himself upon his heart, nor to others in his face ; what sign can you see of the curse of the law, or the wrath of God in that man’s countenance ? what sign of his spiritual captivity and slavery, and of the load of sin that lieth upon his soul, unless it be that he feels it not ? what sign of a man in so great danger of eternal torment, unless it be that he little feareth it ? Doth he sit there like a man that is within a step of hell, and shall shortly be there with the devil and his angels as sure as he is here, unless he be saved by that grace and holiness which he now resists ? No ; he is as confident to be saved as the precisest of you all ; he is as little troubled with the fears of hell or the wrath of God as those that are discharged from it by justification, and perhaps much less. For all this he is beholden to his vain religion, that in the point of self-deceiving is not vain. As solid evidences promote the comforts of true believers, so this superficial kind of religion promoteth the present peace of the presumptuous.

2. This religion is not vain as to the frustration of all the means of grace, and hindering the conversion and salvation of the hypocrite. This is his armour of defence against the sword of the Spirit, that would pierce his heart, and let out his close corruption, and separate him from his beloved sin. What tell you him of repentance and conversion ? He thinks he needeth no conversion, or is converted long ago ! What ! is he not a Christian, a Protestant, a religious man ? Tell swearers, and cursers, and drunkards, and extortioners, and cruel landlords, and fornicators, of conversion ; tell these that they

are slaves of Satan, and under the wrath and curse of God, that are indeed so, past all controversy? but tell not him of it that makes no doubt but he is a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of heaven. He loveth to hear a minister rouse up the profane and grossly sensual offenders, and seems in pity to wish for their conversion, and perhaps will exhort them to turn and mend their lives himself. But he little thinks that he is faster in the prison of Satan than they, and that he is himself in the same condemnation.

Do you go about to tell him of the necessity of the fear of God, and of loving him above all, and of trusting him, and serving him as our only Lord? Why, all this he will confess, and perhaps is as forward to say as you, and verily thinks that he is one that doth it; you may as soon make him believe that he is not an Englishman, as that he is not a Christian, and that he loveth not himself, as that he loveth not God; even while he loveth not to think of him, to speak of him, to call upon him, to obey him; while he loveth not his word, his ways, or servants, or while he loveth the world and the pleasures of sin more heartily, and seeketh them more eagerly, and cleaveth to them more tenaciously, yet if you would persuade him that he hath not a heart as true to God as any of you all, you will lose your labour.

Do you tell him of hypocrisy? he will tell you that it is the thing he hateth: who speaks against it more than he? And because the world shall see he is no hypocrite, he will call them all hypocrites that are faithful to God and to their souls, and will not sit down in his truly hypocritical vain religion, but will be more holy and diligent than he. What can you say to such a man in order to his conversion, which his self-deceiving religion will not frustrate? Do you tell him of hell-fire, and of the wrath of God against the ungodly? All this he can hear as calmly as another man; for he thinks that he is none of the ungodly, he hath scaped the danger; let them be afraid of it whom it doth concern. If you tell him of his sins, he can tell you that all men are sinners; we are imperfect; and you shall never persuade him that his reigning, deadly sins are any other than such human frailties and infirmities as may stand with grace. Do you put him upon the inward practice of religion, and the fuller devoting of his soul to God, and the life of faith, and a heavenly mind? He will tell you, that in his measure, he doth all this already; though none of us are so good as we should be; and his heart being unseen to you, he thinks you must believe him. Do you

blame him for his slightness and formality in religion, and put him upon a more serious, diligent course, and to live as one that seeketh heaven with all his heart, and soul, and might? Why, he thinks you do but persuade him to some self-conceited over-zealous party, and draw him from his moderation to be righteous over much, and to make too much ado with his religion. Unless he be an hypocrite that falleth into the schismatical strain, and then he will make a greater bustle with his opinions and his outside services then you can desire. So that one with his mere book-prayers, forms, and ceremonies, and the other with his mere extemporate words, and affected outside seeming fervour, and both of them by a mere opinionative, lifeless, carnal kind of religion, subject to their fleshly ends and interests, do so effectually cheat their souls that they are armed against all that you can say or do, and you know not how to get within them, or fasten any saving truths upon their hearts.

3. This vain religion is not vain as to the preserving of his reputation in the world. It saveth him from being numbered with the filthy rabble, and from being pointed at as notoriously vicious, or branded with the disgraceful characters of the scandalous. Men say not of him, 'There goeth a drunkard, a swearer, a curser, a fornicator, or a profane ungodly wretch.' He may be esteemed civil, ingenuous, discreet, and perhaps religious, and be much honoured by wise, religious men; though most commonly his formal, or opinionative, heartless kind of religion is discerned or much suspected by experienced, judicious Christians, by his sapless, unexperienced, common and carnal kind of discourse and duty, sticking most in opinions, parties, or some outside things, and by his temporizing, and reserve, and uneven kind of conversation; yet it is not always so; but sometime he is as far unsuspected as the best; perhaps he may be esteemed a reverend preacher, or a discreet, religious, well-accomplished gentleman, and may be set in the head of church or commonwealth, as a leader of the saints on earth, that shall be thrust into the place of hypocrites, and not come near the meanest of the saints in heaven.

4. Lastly, (but better than all this,) his religion is not vain as to the good of others. He may, by the perfume and odour of his gifts, be kept from stinking to the annoyance of others, while he is dead in sin. He may be very serviceable in the church of God; a judicious, earnest expounder of the Scripture, and preacher and defender of the truth; in his place as a magistrate, or master of a family, he may be a severe corrector

of profaneness, and promoter of godliness ; it being much easier to drive others from their sin, than to forsake their own, and to drive on others to a godly life, than to practise it themselves : and by their owning godliness, and disowning sin, they persuade themselves the more effectually that they are truly godly. The Church cannot well spare the gifts and services of hypocrites, and many ungodly men. As bad or sick physicians may be God's instruments to cure our bodies, and a wicked carpenter may make a good house ; so a wicked minister may well expound and apply the Scriptures ; and he that refuseth the grace of Christ, may prevail with others to accept it ; the sign-post that stands out of door itself, may invite others into the house ; and the hand upon a post that goes not one step of the way, may point it out to others. There is more self-denial required to the forsaking of their own sins, than to persuade others to forsake theirs ; a covetous man cares not how liberal others be ; nor a glutton, drunkard, or fornicator, how temperate and chaste his neighbours be. And hence it is that many of these that refuse a holy life themselves, are willing their children or servants should embrace it. The end of the balance that goeth down itself, doth cause the other to go up. Other men's souls are more beholden to hypocrites than their own. They are like the common mariners, that enrich the merchant by fetching home his treasure, when they have nothing but a poor maintenance themselves ; or like tailors, who make ornaments for others, which they never wear themselves ; or like carpenters, that build fair houses which they never dwell in ; or like the cook, that dresseth meat which he eateth not. God giveth hypocrites their usual gifts, for the service of the Church more than for themselves. He sometimes maketh those to be nursing fathers to his Church that are butchers of their own souls, and makes those his instruments to undeceive others, that deceive themselves. And thus far their religion is not vain.

But 1. It is vain as to God's special acceptation. True religion pleaseth God ; but the self-deceiver's opinion he abhorreth. He hath no pleasure in fools. (Eccl. v. 4.) He asketh such, To what purpose is the multitude of their sacrifices ? (Isaiah i. 11,) and saith, he is full of their burnt offerings, and delights not in them. When they come to appear before him he asketh them, Who required this at their hands, to tread in his courts ? and bids them, bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination to him ; the calling of their assemblies he cannot away with, and their solemn meetings are iniquity ; (ver. 12, 13 ;) their

appointed feasts his soul hateth, they are a trouble to him, he is weary to bear them. When they spread forth their hands, he will hide his eyes; when they make many prayers, he will not hear; because they do not forsake their sins, (ver. 14,) because they turn away their ear from hearing his law, their prayer is abomination to him. (Pro. xxviii. 9. and xv. 8. and xxi. 27.) When they have sinned, instead of repenting and forsaking it, they think to please God by their religion, and stop the mouth of justice with their services; whereas they do but provoke him more, by adding hypocrisy to iniquity. Were they truly willing to let go their sins, and to please God by universal obedience, he would willingly accept them, and be pleased with their services. But when men's religion, their prayers and other duties, are not used against their sins, but for them, not to kill them, but to cover them, not to overcome them, but as it were to bribe God to give them leave to sin, because they are not willing to forsake it, this is the self-deceiving religion of hypocrites, that is in vain.

2. And this religion is in vain, as to any promoting of a work of sanctification upon his soul. It weaneth him not from the world; it crucifieth not the flesh, with its affections and lusts; it doth not further his self-denial, nor driveth him to Christ, by a faith unfeigned; it never raiseth him to a heavenly life, nor kindleth the love of God within him; it is dead and ineffectual, and cannot produce these high effects. Yea, on the contrary, it hardeneth him in sin and self-deceit; it hindereth his repentance; it emboldeneth him in his fleshly, worldly life, and quieteth him in the neglect of Christ and heaven.

3. Moreover this kind of religion is vain as to any solid peace of conscience. It affordeth him none of the well-grounded, durable comforts of the saints; but, on the contrary, keepeth out solid comfort by feeding him with airy, delusory conceits; and making him to be but his own comforter, upon fancies and confidence of his own, when the Spirit of Christ is not his comforter; nor doth the word of God speak any peace at all unto him.

4. Lastly, his religion is in vain, as to his salvation. As he had but an image of true religion, so he shall have but an image of heaven. Some dreams and self-created hopes of happiness may accompany him to the door of eternity, but there they will leave him to everlasting horror.

V. *Use.* 1. From what hath been said, you may see the reason why an outside, formal, seeming religiousness, is a thing so common in the world, in comparison of the life and power of godliness.

It is an easier thing to bring men to the strictest opinion, than to bring them to the affectionate and deep reception and practice of the truth. A strict opinion may be held without any great cost and trouble to the flesh. It is the practice that bereaveth a sinner of the pleasure of his sin. It is the common trick by which most hypocrites cheat their souls, to turn to the side and opinion, and assemblies and company, which they think to be the best; that so they may persuade themselves the more easily, that they are as good as those opinions and that company doth import, and that they are truly such as those they join with. As men are taken by others for such as those they correspond with; so hypocrites take themselves for such. As if it would prove that a man is sound, because he dwelleth with them that are so? Or as it would prove a man rich or honourable, that he converseth with such? As God will not save any nations on earth, because they are such nations; nor will he save men because they are of such or such a trade, or because they are skilled in this or that art or science; no more will he save men for being of this or that party or sect, in matters of religion. One thinks when he hath lived a fleshly life, he shall be saved for hearing or saying the common prayer, or because he is for prelacy and ceremonies; another thinks he shall be saved, because he can pray without a book, or form of words, or because he frequenteth the private meetings of those that more diligently redeem their time for spiritual advantages than others do; another thinks he shall be saved because he is mocked as a Puritan or as too strict, as others are that are serious believers, and diligent in the things of God; and another thinks that he shall be saved because he is re-baptized, or because he joineth with some separate congregation, which pretendeth to be more strict than others. But none shall be saved, on any such account as these. Cain could not be saved, for being the first born in the family of Adam; Ham could not be saved for being in the ark and family of Noah; nor Esau for being in the house of Isaac; nor Absalom for being the son of David; nor Judas for being a disciple in the family of Christ. Even Mary that brought him forth, could not have been saved by him, if she had not had a better title; and had not borne him in her heart. (Mark iii. 34, 35.) When they talk to him of his mother and his brethren, Christ looked upon those that sat about him, and told them that, whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is his brother, his sister, and his mother. It is no outward badge and livery, but a heart-title, that must

prove you the heirs of heaven. You may be snatched out of the purest Church on earth, and from the purest ordinances, and out of the arms of the most upright Christians, and cast into hell, if you have no better evidences than such, to show for your salvation. If ever you be saved, it must not be because you are Papists, or Protestants, Lutherans, or Calvinists, Arminians, Antinomians, Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterian, or Prelatical; formally and merely as such; but because you are true Christians, that have the Spirit of Christ, (Rom. viii. 9,) and are conformed to him, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, and live in sincere obedience to his will. But hypocrites that want the inward life and power of religion, and are conscious of their wilful sins, would fain borrow something from the parties which they join with, or the opinions which they take up, or the formal outward worship which they perform, or the alms which they give, to make up the want, and cheat their souls with a self-created confidence, that they shall be saved.

But more specially you may hence observe the reason that popery hath so many followers, and that it is so easy a thing to make an infidel, whoremonger, or drunkard, to turn a papist, when yet it is not easy to bring them to faith, and chastity, and temperance, much less to the unfeigned love of God, and to a holy, heavenly life. Though I doubt not but there are many sincere-hearted Christians among the papists, yet popery itself is of an hypocritical strain, and is notably suited to the hypocrite's disposition. It is revived Pharisaism: I marvel that they tremble not when they read themselves so lively characterized by Christ, with the addition of so many terrible woes, as in Matt. xxiii., and other places, frequently they are: "Woe to the scribes, pharisees, hypocrites." They bind heavy burdens of external observances, to lay upon the consciences of their proselytes: they make broad their phylacteries; and in variety of holy vestures, they make ostentation of such a religion, as a peacock may have when he spreads his tail. They contend for superiority and titles to be called rabbi, pope, cardinal, patriarch, primate, metropolitan, archbishop, diocesan, abbot, prior, father, &c., to the great disturbance of all the nations of the christian world. They must needs be the fathers and masters of our faith: they shut the kingdom of heaven against the people, forbidding all to read the scriptures in their vulgar tongue, without a special license from their ordinary: and commanding them to worship God in a

strange tongue which they do not understand : by the numbers of their masses and prayers for the dead, they delude the souls, and devour the patrimony of the living. In temples, and altars, and images, and ornaments consisteth no small part of their religion : they make more of tithing mint, anise and cummin, than of judgment, mercy, and faith, the weightier matters of the law. The outside they make clean, and appear as beautiful to men, as ceremonies and outward pomp can make them. They make it a part of their religion to murder the living saints, and keep holy days for the dead : they build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Thus, Matt. xxiii., is their description. They have their touch not, taste not, handle not, after the commandments and doctrines of men, their voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, and other rudiments of the world, and things that have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. (Col. ii. 19—23.) How easy a thing is it to bring an ungodly man to be of a religion that consisteth in such things as these ! in eating fish on certain days instead of flesh ; and saying over so many Pater Nosters, and Ave Marias, and naming so oft the name of Jesus ; in worshipping a piece of consecrated bread with divine worship ; in bowing and praying before an image ; in praying to the souls of such as the pope tells them are saints in heaven ; in crossing themselves, and being sprinkled with holy water, and using Agnus Deis, and consecrated grains and annulets ; in dropping of beads ; in saying such words as a prayer at such a canonical hour, and such words the next canonical hour ; in hearing a mass in Latin, and saying a Latin prayer ; in being anointed with hallowed oil, and burning hallowed candles on the altars by day-light ; in going so many miles to the chapel of a saint in pilgrimage ; in carrying about them a bone, or some other supposed relic of a supposed saint ; in confessing their sins so often to a priest, and doing penance, if he impose it on them. And so while they live in whoredom, or drunkenness, or swearing, or lying, or all these, and many other such, it is but confessing and doing penance, and to it again ; on which account (whatever some of them say for the necessity of contrition) it is usual with them, to venture upon the sins of whoredom, drunkenness, and the rest,

because they have so easy and cheap a remedy at hand. And therefore I wonder not that among infidels (who, after baptism, apostatize to deny the holy scriptures, and the immortality of the soul, and the life to come,) and among common swearers, and cursers, and whoremongers, and drunkards, the papists find their labours most successful, and that no fish will so easily take their bait: nor do I wonder that it is a point of the popish faith that none but the children of the devil, that are void of the love of God, and are unjustified, can possibly turn papists. (For they tell us that all are such till they are papists; saving that they are many of them for the salvation of heathens.) A poor wretch that is captivated to his odious lusts, and goes under a galled accusing conscience, will be content to take a popish cure, and quiet his soul with a few compliments, and formalities. But to bring one of these men to a thorough conversion, to a true humiliation, to a deep hatred of all sin, and a love of holiness, to close with Christ as his only refuge from the wrath of God, and to give up himself without any reservation, and all that he hath to the will and service of the Lord, to love God as his portion, and the infinite transcendent good; to take all the honour and riches of the world as loss and dung, and use all in due subserviency to everlasting happiness; to crucify the flesh, and mortify all his earthly inclinations, and live a life of self-denial, and to walk with God, and serve him as a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, and to keep a watch over thoughts, affections, words, and deeds, to live by faith upon a world and happiness that is to us unseen; and to live in preparation for their death, and wait in hope to live with Christ; this is Christianity and true religion; and this is it that they will not so easily be brought to. It is easier to make an hundred papists than one true regenerate Christian. Children can make them a baby of clouts; and the statuary can make a man of alabaster or stone: but none can give life, which is essential to a man indeed, but God. There needeth the Spirit of the living God, by a supernatural operation, and a kind of new creation to make a man a real holy christian. But to bring a man to make such a congèe, or wear such a vesture, or say such and such words, and make to himself a mimical religion, this may be done, without any such supernatural work. O therefore take heed of cheating your souls by hypocritical formalities, instead of the life and power of religion.

Use 2. And now, O that the Lord of life would help you so

to apply this truth, and help you so to apply it to yourselves, that it might be as a light set up in the assembly and in all your consciences, to undeceive the miserable self-deceivers, and to bring poor hypocrites into some better acquaintance with themselves, and to turn their seeming, vain religion into that which is real, serious, and saving !

And now I am to search and convince the hypocrite, I could almost wish that all the upright, tender souls that are causelessly in doubt of their own sincerity, were out of the congregation, lest they should misapply the hypocrite's portion to themselves, and think it is their case that I am describing : as it is usual with ignorant patients, especially if they be a little melancholy, when they hear or read the description of many dangerous diseases, to think that all or some of them are theirs, because they have some symptoms very like to some of those which they hear or read of. Or lest their fearful souls should be too much terrified, by hearing of the misery of the hypocrite ; as a fearful child, that is innocent, will cry when he sees another whipped that is faulty. But if thou wilt stay and hear the hypocrite's examination, I charge thee, poor humbled, drooping soul, that thou do not misunderstand me, nor think that I am speaking those things to thee, that are meant to the false-hearted enemies of the Lord ! and do not imagine that thou art condemned in his condemnation ; nor put thyself under the strokes that are given him ; but rejoice that thou art saved from this state of self-deceit and misery. And that thou mayest have some shelter for thy conscience against the storm that must fall on others, look back on the foregoing description of the hypocrite, and thou mayest find that thou hast the saving graces, which thou discovered him to want. Let these at present be before thine eyes, and tell thee, thou art not the person that I mean.

1. Thou art humbled to a loathing of thyself for thy transgressions.

2. Thou art willing to give up thyself to Christ, without reserve, that, as thy Saviour, he may cure thy miserable soul, upon his own terms.

3. The favour of God is dearer to thee than the favour of the world, or the pleasures and prosperity of sinners : and thou longest more to love him better, and to feel his love, than for any of the honours and advancements that flesh and blood desire.

4. It is the life to come that thou takest for thy portion, and preferrest before the matters of this transitory life.

5. Thy religion employeth thee about thy heart, as much as about the outside and appearing part ; it is heart sins that thou observest and lamentest, and a better heart that thou daily longest, and prayest, and labourest for.

6. Thou livest not in any gross and deadly sin ; and thou hast no infirmity but what thou longest and labourest to be rid of ; and goest on in the use of Christ's holy means and remedies for a cure.

7. Thou dislikest not the highest degree of holiness, but lovest it and longest after it, and hadst rather be more holy than be more honourable or more rich.

8. Thou unfeignedly lovest the image of Christ on the souls of all his servants where thou canst discern it ; and seest a special excellency in a poor, humble, heavenly Christian, though never so low or despicable in the world, above all the pomp and splendour of the earth ; and thou lovest them with a special love ; and the holier they are, the better dost thou love them.

9. Thou lovest the most convincing, searching sermons, and wouldest fain have help to know the worst that is in thy heart ; and comest unto the light that thy heart and deeds may be made manifest.

10. All this is the bent and bias of thy soul ; thy habituated, ordinary case : though there be not alway the same opportunity for the acts, nor the same degree of life in acting. It is not only a good mood that thou art frightened into by some affliction, and then returnest to thy carnal course of life again ; but thou heartily continuest thy consent to the covenant which thou hast made with Christ, and wouldest not turn back to a worldly, carnal, or formal life, nor change thy Master, nor forsake the holy course which thou art engaged in for all the world.

This is the truth of thy case, poor, doubting, troubled Christian ! thou canst not deny it without much injury to thyself and God. And therefore be not now troubled at that which I shall say to the self-deceivers.

And now I am to speak to the self-deceiver, I perceive my task to be exceeding difficult : to get within him that is so guarded ; and to pierce his heart that is so armed ; and to open his eyes that is willing to be blind ; and to undeceive him that hath so long deceived, and that studieth to deceive himself, and is engaged in that unhappy work, by such subtle enemies that further his deceit, and by so many allurements, and

such strong corruptions, and by a seeming necessity for the quieting of his conscience ; all this is not an easy work. But we must attempt it, and leave the success to grace. And, first, let me solemnly profess before you all, (for the removing of your prejudice, and the calming of your resisting hearts,) that it is none of my desire, by the discovery of your hypocrisy, to shame you before others, or to make you seem more miserable than you are, or to disturb and grieve you any more than is necessary to the escaping of your exceeding danger, and than your own salvation and comforts do require. But when we know that religion is your business in the world ; and that an endless world shall presently receive you ; and that Christ is coming ; and your souls are ready to quit their residence, and take their leave of your flesh till the resurrection ; and when we know that hypocrisy and self-deceit is the thing that you are most in danger of, and that you must be saved from it, or be in hell for ever ; and that the enemies of your souls will do all they can to keep their possession in peace, and to continue your deceit till you are past remedy ; what would you have us do in such a case ? would you wish us to be silent, and betray your souls, and damn our own for fear of disquieting and displeasing you ? How hard are your hearts, if you would wish us to do thus !

Be awakened, therefore, O all ye self-deceivers ! and know that hypocrisy, as the harlot's paint, is but a base and borrowed beauty ; that will vanish away when you draw near the fire ; and that self-deceit will quiet you so short a time, that it is as good let go your delusory peace, and comfortable dream to day as to-morrow ; and it is better now to begin and examine yourselves, than stay till the dreadful judge examine you, who is even at the door ! The discovery of your case is the one half of your cure : and as you have been your own deceivers, let us in justice find you so equitable to yourselves, as to be willing of the light that must undeceive you ; and to go along with us into your consciences, and help us in the search, and impartially pass a preventing judgment, that Christ may not pass a condemning judgment.

And in order to your conviction and recovery, I shall first acquaint you with your misery, that so it may awaken you to look about you, while there is time and hope. If it were God's way to work by ocular demonstrations, and the christian life were a life of sense, and you had heaven and hell this hour open to your sight, how little need should I have to plead

this cause with you any further? you would then see and hear that vengeance that would awake you; and make you presently fly into your hearts, and charge conscience to deal impartially with you, lest self-deceit should bring you to those flames. But it is a life of faith that we are to call you to, and a word of faith that we have to preach; but of things that are as sure as if you saw them.

And 1. If thy religion be vain, thy hopes and comforts, that are built upon it, are all but vain. How vain is that hope that will vanish when the enjoyment is expected, and will end in endless desperation! What though thou sit here with so great hopes and confidence of salvation as maketh thee even scorn the man that questions it, art thou ever the better when death awakeneth thee, and thy confident dream is at an end? When thou art dying wilt thou hope? Perhaps thou mayest: but when thou art burning wilt thou hope? When thou art tormented wilt thou hope? Desperation will then be essential to thy misery. The devils that now feed thy hope by their deceits, will then as readily keep awake thy conscience, and exasperate thy despairing soul. If now thou wilt hope under the threatenings of God (that thou mayest be saved in thy present state) wilt thou then hope under his execution? Thy flatterers and prosperity may cherish thy deceitful hopes for a time, but who will maintain them, when God commandeth desperation to torment thee? (Job xxvii. 8, 9.) “For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?” As Sands turneth it:—

What hope hath the prevailing hypocrite,
When God shall chase his soul to endless night?
Will God relieve him in his agonies?
Or from the depth of sorrows hear his cries?

His worldly glory will then desert him, and leave him to the fruit of his deserts: his fruition will perish with his hopes. (Job xxvii. 22, 23.) “For God shall cast upon him and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.” Or as Sands turneth it:

God shall transfix him with his winged dart;
Though he avoid him like a flying hart.
Men shall pursue with merited disgrace;
Hiss, clap their hands, and from his country chase.

Hopes that are built by self-deceit have no foundation but sand and water, and in trial they will fall, and their fall will be

great and terrible. (Matt. vii. 23, 24; Job viii. 11—15.) “Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb: so are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.” Or—

Can bull-rushes but by the rivers grow?
 Can flags there flourish where no waters flow?
 Yet they, when green, when yet untouch’d of all
 That clothe the spring, first hang their heads, and fall.
 So double-hearted hypocrites; so they
 Who God forget, shall in their prime decay.
 Their airy hopes, as brittle as the thin
 And subtle webs which toiling spiders spin:
 Their houses full of wealth and riot, shall
 Deceive their trust, and crush them in their fall, &c.

Job. xxxvi. 13. “The hypocrites in their heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.” Or as the phrase:—

For the deluder hastens his own fall,
 Nor will in trouble on th’ Almighty call.
 Who on the beds of sin supinely lie,
 They in the summer of their age shall die.

And what we say of the hypocrite’s hope, we may say also of all his pleasures and delights. He may now be as merry as the most righteous of his neighbours, and seem the most happy, because the most jocund; and abound with medicines against melancholy, and all wise and sober consideration: even his business, his cups, his wantonness and uncleanness, or, at least, his less disgraceful pleasures and recreations, which fortify his mind against the fears of death and judgment, and all the threatenings of God—

As sleepy opium fortifies the brain,
 Against the sense of sicknesses and pain.

And if this mirth could always last, how happy a man were the self-deceiver! But, saith Solomon, (Eccles. vii. 6.) “As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.”

As thorns beneath a cauldron catch the fire,
 Blaze with a noise, and suddenly expire;
 Such is the causeless laughter of vain fools;
 This vanity in their distemper rules.

And as Job xx. 4—9. “Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reacheth

to the clouds ; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung ; they which have seen him shall say, Where is he ? He shall flee away as a dream, and shall not be found ; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him shall see him no more ; neither shall his place any more behold him." Or, as the aforesaid Paraphrase—

This is a truth with which the world began,
 Since earth was first inhabited by man ;
 Sin's triumph in swift misery concludes,
 And flattering joy the hypocrite deludes.
 Although his excellence to heaven aspire ;
 Though radiant beams his shining brows attire ;
 He as his dung shall perish on the ground ;
 Nor shall th' impression of his steps be found ;
 But like a troubled dream shall take his flight ;
 And vanish as a vision of the night ;
 No mortal eye shall see his face again,
 Nor sumptuous roofs their builder entertain.

Thus as the hypocrite's religion is vain, so all his hopes and joys will be vain, and will deceive him, as he deceived himself. As Zophar concludeth of him: (Job xi. 20 :) " But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." Poor soul ! thy religion also is so vain, that it giveth thee no solid satisfaction or delight : thou art fain to go to thy lands, or friends, or pleasures, or carnal accommodations for delight : thy religion, which should let thee into heaven, and there refresh thee with the foretastes of everlasting pleasures, and should daily fetch thee fresh delights from the face of God, alas ! is an impotent lifeless thing ; acquainted with shadows, but strange to the invisible substance ; acquainted with formal shows and ceremonies, but unacquainted with God ; acquainted with the letter, but not with the spirit ; familiar with the orders of the church, but strange to the foretastes of heaven. If thou hadst no other comfort but what thy dead religion brings thee from the face of God, thy pensive heart would be better disposed to consideration and recovery than it is. If thou hadst a faith that brought thee in any solid, stablishing content, what needest thou be hunting abroad the world among thy crowd of vanities and deceits, to beg or borrow some short delight, which thou must return with griping usury ? and what needest thou so many pitiful shifts to muzzle thy conscience, and to keep that peace a little longer, which will end in sorrow, and will part with thee as the devil went out of the possessed person (Mark ix. 26) that rent him, and left him as a dead

man? That religion is certainly vain, that is not sufficient to acquaint the soul with matter of solid comfort and content, but leaves that felicitating work to worldly transitory things, while itself is used only as a screen, to keep hell-fire from scorching the conscience, or as children's rackets, to quiet them when they are apt to cry.

2. But the vanity of a superficial religion will most appear in the hour of extremity; when their help, as well as their hope and comfort, will to them prove vain. Prosperity will not always last: as sure as winter followeth summer, and as the darksome night succeeds the day, so sure will adversity take its turn: sickness will follow the longest health, and death succeed the longest life; and your house of darkness in the dust will hold you longer than your present habitations. And when thou seest all things fail, O what wouldest thou give for a hope and help that will not fail, that thou mightest be received into the everlasting habitations! The conscience that is now asleep, will be shortly awakened in such a manner, that it will be utterly past the skill and power of thyself, and all the friends thou hast, to cast it asleep, or quiet it again. And then, what wouldest thou not give for a lenitive to pacify it! no wonder if thou sit here as senseless as if no harm were near thee: it is now in thy power not to believe that there is a hell for hypocrites, or that it is thy own inheritance: but the day is near, (if a supernatural change prevent it not,) when it shall no more be in thy power, but sight and feeling shall convince thee whether thou wilt or no. Now we must entreat thy own consideration, and solicit thee for thy own consent, to know thy grievous sin and misery, and yet leave thee unconvinced, because thou art unwilling to know the truth, and because we cannot show thee heaven and hell while we are speaking of them: but then God will not crave, but force thy consideration: nor will he ask thy consent to feel thy misery: but the less thou art willing, the more thou hast to feel. And which way then wilt thou look for help? which way ever it be, it will be all in vain, because thy religion was but vain; wilt thou look to thy duties and supposed honesty, whose sincerity now thou art so confident of? alas, this is the vain religion that could deceive thee, but cannot save thee. Thou art like a man in a falling house, that hath nothing to lay hold on, but that which is falling, and it is that will break him unto death. Or like a drowning man that hath nothing but a handful of water to lay hold upon; which is it that will

choke him, but is vain to save him. It is thy superficial, hypocritical, complimentary services that will fall with thee, and fall upon thee, that will thus both deceive thee, and choke thee in the time of thy distress. To be told now that thy religion is vain, is a thing that thy dead, unbelieving heart can too easily bear; but to find then, when thou lookest for the benefit of it, that it is vain, is that which is not borne so easily, but will overturn the stoutest heart with terrors. If thou wert a man of no religion, and so hadst none to deceive and quiet thee, thou couldst scarcely keep off thy terrors now: if thou hadst not thy hollow-hearted prayers, thy affected zeal, or forms, and shows, and tasks of duty, thy profession, with its secret exceptions and reserves, thy smoothed outside, with the good conceit thou hast of thyself, and the good esteem that other men have of thee; if thou hadst not these to flatter thy conscience, and cloak thee from the storms of threatened wrath, thou wouldest perhaps walk about like another Cain, and be afraid of every man thou seest, and tremble at the shaking of a leaf, and still look behind thee as afraid of a pursuit. But, alas! it will be ten thousand times more terrible to find thy confidence prove deceit; and thy religion vain, when God is judging thee, when hell is before thee, and thou art come to the last of thine expectations! nay, then to find not only that thy superficial religion was vanity, and lighter than vanity, nothing, and less than nothing; but that it was thy sin, and that which will now torment thee, and the remembrance of it be to thee as the remembrance of drunkenness to the drunkard, and of fornication to the unclean, and of covetousness to the worldling, the rust of whose money will eat his flesh, and burn like fire. O what a doleful plight is this! when the sentence is ready to pass upon thee, and hell is gaping to devour thee, and thou lookest for help to thy vain religion, and criest out, ‘O now, or never help! help me, or I am a firebrand of unquenchable wrath: help me, or I must be tormented in those flames: help me now, or it will be too late, and I shall never, never more have help!’ Then to have thy self-deceit discovered, and thy seeming religion condemn thee, and torment thee, instead of helping thee, what anguish and confusion will this cast thy hopeless soul into, such as no heart can here conceive! Thy guilty soul will be like a hare among a company of dogs: whichsoever of thy duties thou fliest for help to, that will make first to tear thee, and devour thee.

Like a naked man in the midst of an army of his deadly enemies : whichsoever he flieth to for pity and relief, is like to be one of the first to wound him. Poor self-deceiver ! what wilt thou then do, or whither wilt thou betake thy soul for help ? The reason why thou canst now make shift with a lifeless shadow of religion, is, because thou hast thy sports or pleasures, thy friends and flatterers, thy worldly business to divert thy thoughts, and take thee up, and rock the cradle of thy security ; and thy piety is not yet brought unto the fire, nor thy heart and duties searched by the all-discovering light : but when the light comes in, and when all thy fleshly contents are gone, and when thou comest to have use for thy religion, and seest that, if it prove unsound, thou art lost for ever, O then it is not shadows, and shows, and compliments, that will quiet thee. That will not serve turn then, that serves turn now. Thou wilt find then that it was easier deceiving thyself than God. (Gal. vi. 3—5, 7.) “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work : For every man shall bear his own burden. Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

But perhaps thou wilt say, it is not any duties, but Christ that I must trust to : he will be my help, and he is sufficient, and will not deceive the soul that trusteth in him.

Answer. Undoubtedly he is sufficient, and will not deceive thee. But doth he deceive thee, if he give thee not the salvation which he never promised thee ? he never promised salvation to an hypocrite (without conversion). It is the upright soul devoted to him, that takes him for the absolute master of his life, and for his only portion and felicity, to whom Christ hath promised salvation : and his promise shall be made good, and the sincere shall find that Christ deceives them not. But where did he ever promise salvation to a superficial pharisee ? to such a seeming Christian as thou ? show such a promise from him if thou canst ; and then trust it and spare not. But thou dost not trust him, but thy own deceit, if he have given thee no such promise to trust on. Nay, rather, should he not deceive all the world, if he should save such superficial hypocrites, when he hath professed in his word that he will not save them ? and if he should not condemn such heartless formalists, when he hath so often

told us that he will condemn them? surely he that breaks his word is liker to be a deceiver, than he that keepeth it. Be it known to thee therefore (and O that thou wouldest know it while there is a remedy at hand) that if thou trust that Christ should save an unsanctified false-hearted person, whose soul was never renewed and revived by the Holy Ghost, and absolutely given up to God, and that setteth not up God and his service above all the interest of the flesh, and the commodities and contentments of the world, thou dost not then trust Christ, but thy own deceits and lies; and it is not Christ that is the deceiver, but thou art a deceiver of thyself, that makest thyself a false promise, and trustest to it; and when thou hast done, sayest, thou wilt trust to Christ: yea, trustest thyself against Christ, and trustest that he will break his word, and not that he will make it good. See whether he resolve not to condemn all such. Matt. x. 37, 38; Luke xiv. 27, 33; Matt. vii. 26, 27; James ii. 14; Heb. xii. 14; Rom. viii. 9. with the texts before cited, and abundance such. Christ will be a Saviour; but he is the Saviour of the body, and not of the affixed hypocrites. (Eph. v. 23.) And his body is the church which is subject to him. (Verse 24.) "He will save to the utmost:" but whom? "even all that come to God by him," (Heb. vii. 2, 5,) but not those that make the world their God, and would put God off with a few running heartless words and duties. It is the living fruitful branches that he will save: but the withered branches he casteth forth, to be burned in the fire. (John xv. 2—7.) "No man can serve God and Mammon:" nor live both to the Spirit and the flesh: he that hath two hearts, hath none that is acceptable unto God: he that hath two faces (a face of devotion in his formal customary services, and a face that smiles on the world and fleshly pleasures when he hath done) hath none that God will ever smile upon. The leaves of the barren fig-tree saved it not from the curse of Christ. (Matt. xxi. 18, 19.) "Hew it down and cast it into the fire," shall be the sentence of the most flourishing tree that is fruitless. (Luke xiii. 7.) "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 7, 8.) So that if thy religion be vain, the blood of Christ, and all the treasures of his grace will be vain to thee, that are saving unto others. An infidel may then as

well expect to be saved by the Christ whom he rejected, as thou. Nay it is Christ himself that will condemn thee : it is his own mouth that will say to such as thee, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." And though thou couldest say, "Lord, Lord, I have prophesied, or cast out devils, or done many wonderful works in thy name," he "will profess to thee that he never knew thee," or owned thee. (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) If crying would then serve, I know thou wouldest not spare thy cries. But he must so pray as to be accepted and heard on earth, that looks to be accepted and regarded then ; when the miserable soul, with endless horrors in its eye, is looking round about for help, and findeth none ; when all the creatures say, we cannot, and he that can shall say, I will not ; who can apprehend the calamity of such a soul ? what soul so sleepy and regardless now, that will not then cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," when the door is shut, and it is too late ? (Matt. xxv. 10—12.) Then if thou roar in the anguish of thy soul, and cry out to him that saveth others 'Condemn me not, O Lord, but save me also ! now Lord have mercy on a miserable sinner ! save me, or I am lost for ever : save me, or I must burn in yonder flame : turn not thy heart against an undone perishing soul ; if thou cast me off, I have no hope !' a thousand such cries would be in vain, because thou hadst but a vain religion. (Prov. i. 24, &c.) "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you ; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me :—Therefore they shall eat of their own way, and be filled with their own devices," saith the Lord.

And when hell hath once taken thee into its possession, if thou cry and roar there ten thousand millions of ages it will be all in vain. Thy strongest and thy longest cries cannot procure thee a drop of water to cool thy tongue, tormented in those flames. (Luke xvi. 24—26.)

In a word, if thy religion be vain, all is vain to thee ; thy life itself is vain. (Eccles. vi. 12.) Thou walkest in a vain show. (Psalm xxxix. 6.) Thou disquietest thyself in vain, in all thy labours ; (Psalm xxxix. 6, and cxxvii. 1, 2 ;) and vanity and vexation is all that thou shalt possess. (Eccles. i. 2, 14 ; Prov.

xxii. 8.) And if conscience, when thy day of grace is past, shall force thee upon the review to say, 'My piety was but seeming and self-deceit, and all my religion was vain;' it will be the voice of utter desperation, and will stab the heart of all thy hopes. This, and no better, being the self-deceiver's case, is not conscience now at work within you, and asking, as each of the disciples did, (Matt. xxvi. 24, 25,) "Is it I?" If thou have a heart within thee, beseeming a reasonable creature, by this time thou art afraid of self-deceit, and willing to be searched, and to know thy hypocrisy while it may be cured. For my part, I shall pronounce no one of you personally to be an hypocrite, as knowing that hypocrisy is a sin of the heart, which, in itself, is seen by none but God and him that hath it. But my business is only to help such to know and judge themselves. Could I name the man to you in the congregation that had none but a seeming, vain religion, I am persuaded you would all look upon him as a most unhappy, deplorable wretch. Alas! sirs, hypocrites are not so rare among us, as some imagine. There are few, or none, but saints and hypocrites in this assembly, or in most of the assemblies in the land. I think here are none that make not a profession of the christian faith, and of love to God. All, therefore, that have not this faith and love, must needs be hypocrites, as professing to be what they are not. In your baptism you engaged and professed yourselves the disciples of Christ, and gave up yourselves in solemn covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This covenant, you will say, you stand to yet; and none of you will be known to have renounced your Christianity. As Christians, you use to come to these assemblies, and here to attend God in the use of his ordinances, and some of you to renew your covenant with him in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I meet with none that will say, 'I am no Christian, nor a servant of the God of heaven; I am an infidel, and rebel against the Lord.' I think there is none of you but would take it ill if I should call you such, or should deny you to be Christians and men fearing God. If, therefore, you are not such, indeed, you must needs be hypocrites. What say you? Is there any of you that profess yourselves to be ungodly, unbelievers, and servants of the devil; and will take this as your current title, disclaiming the love and service of the Lord? I think you will not. If you are such as you profess, you are all saints, and shall be saved. If any of you be not such, they can be nothing else but hypocrites.

Seeing, therefore, that you are all either saints or hypocrites, come now to the bar, and refuse not a trial that may prevent the terrors of another kind of trial that you cannot refuse.

And here let me set before you your profession, and then try yourselves whether you are such as you profess yourselves to be or not. And I think I may take it for granted that the Articles of the Creed and the Baptismal Covenant is the least that every one of you do profess; and that the desires, implied in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, you all profess to be your own desires, and that you take the Ten Commandments for part of the rule of your obedience. Let us peruse them briefly in the several parts.

1. Do you not all say that you "believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and that you will "have no other Gods but him?" and are you not accordingly engaged in covenant with him? You will not deny it. And what is the meaning of this much of your profession? It is no less than to take God for the only infinite good, to be loved with the chiefest love, and to take him for your absolute Lord and Governor, the owner of you and all you have, to whom you owe universal, absolute obedience; and that you are truly willing to love him above all, and fear him, and trust him, and obey him accordingly, though your flesh and all the world should be against it. He that meaneth not all this, doth dissemble or lie, when he saith he taketh God to be his God: for to be God, is to be this much to us.

And really is it thus with you as you profess? Speak but as men that dare not lie before the Lord that knows your hearts. Do you indeed love God as God, with your superlative love? Are your hearts set upon him? Do you make it your principal care to please him? Is it your delight to do his will? Is it sweeter to you to think and speak of him than of the world? Doth it grieve you most to offend him? In a word, you are not such strangers to nature but you know what love is: and you are not such strangers to your own hearts, but you know what it is to love your pleasure, your profit, your honour, and your friend. Can conscience say before the Lord that you love him better than all these? If not more passionately, yet more deeply, effectually, and resolvedly—with a love that will cause you to deny and part with all for him. If you thus truly love him as God, and above all, how comes it to pass that you seek the world more carefully and eagerly than him; and that you

are more pleased with worldly thoughts, and speeches, and employments, than with divine? Were not the hypocrite justly blinded, and a wilful stranger to himself, he could not but know that he loveth not God as God, and above all. And to love him, in subordination to your flesh and its contents, is not at all to love him as God; as it is no degree of conjugal love to love a wife but as a servant, nor no degree of the love due to your sovereign to love him as an equal or as a slave.

And if really you take God for your absolute Lord and Governor, why is it then that you take no pleasure in his laws, but count them too strict, and had rather be at your own dispose? Why is it that you obey your fleshly desires, before and against the God whom you acknowledge? Why will you not be persuaded to that holiness, justice, and charity, which you know his law commandeth you? Why do you wilfully continue in those sins which conscience tells you God forbids? Will you live in wilful disobedience, and love your sins, and loath your duty, and obstinately continue thus, and yet profess that you take God for your God, and, consequently, for your Lord and Governor? and yet will you not confess that you are dissembling hypocrites?

2. Do you not all profess that you “believe in Jesus Christ;” and have you not, in covenant, taken him for your Saviour and Lord? and do you so, indeed, or do you not, play the hypocrites? If you believe in Christ, and take him for your Saviour, you then take your sins for the disease and misery of your souls, and you are so grieved for them, and weary of them, and humbled in the apprehension of your lost estate, that you fly to Christ as your only refuge from the wrath and curse of the offended Majesty, and value his justifying and healing grace before all the riches of the world; and you are willing to take his bitterest medicines, and use the means appointed by him for the destruction of your sin and the perfecting of his graces. And is it thus with you that have unhumbled hearts, that never felt the need of Christ, as condemned miserable men must do; and that love the sin that he would cure, and are unwilling to be mortified and sanctified by his grace? Unless a carcass be a man, such hypocrites as these are no true Christians, and have but a seeming, self-deceiving faith.

3. Do you not all profess “to believe in the Holy Ghost;” and are you not engaged to him in covenant as your Sanctifier; and do you not grossly play the hypocrites here? If not, how

comes it to pass that you stick in your natural state, as if you had no need of sanctification ; and live as quietly without any acquaintance with true regeneration, and the Spirit to dwell and rule within you, as if you needed no such change ? Or else, that you take up with a formal, an affected, or a forced kind of religion, instead of sanctification and spiritual devotion ? And how comes it to pass that you distaste the highest degrees of holiness ; and that you will not be brought to the mortification, self-denial, and unreserved obedience, which are the essence of sanctification ? As for the more debauched, profane sort of hypocrites that can make a common mock of godliness, and scorn at the very name of holiness and sanctification, and deride at all that pretend to have the Spirit, I had rather tremble at the thought of their misery than now stand to reprove that notorious hypocrisy, which professeth to believe in the Holy Spirit which they deride, and covenanteth with the Sanctifier, while they hate and mock, or, at least, do obstinately refuse, sanctification, When God himself tells us, (Rom. viii. 9,) “That if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his :” and therefore to deride a man for professing that he hath the Spirit, is to deride him for professing to be a Christian.

4. Do you not all profess to “believe the holy Catholic Church ;” that is, that Christ hath a people dispersed through the world, that are sanctified by his Spirit, and made a holy peculiar people, whom he loveth as his spouse and as his own body, of which number you must be if you will be saved ? And yet, at the same time, the members of this church you contemn, the holiness of it you secretly hate, and the faithful pastors in it you despise and disobey. Is not this hypocrisy ?

5. You all profess to “believe the communion of saints ;” that is, that the true members of the Catholic Church are all saints, that have one and the same Spirit, and walk by the same holy law or rule, and in holiness must converse together, and join together for the public worshipping of God, according to his own institution ; and must purely and fervently love each other with such a charity as shall make one as ready to relieve another, when God calls for it, as if our riches did belong, in common, to the saints. This is the meaning of this article of your creed. And do I then need to ask you whether those that profess this are hypocrites, if they hate the saints and their inward spiritual communion ; and if they love them but with that lifeless charity that James describeth ? (James ii. 14, 15, &c.) or

if they despise or hate the discipline, ordinances, and holy communion of the church ; and if they live in communion with drunkards, with harlots, with worldlings, or sensual, vain, or ambitious men, and fly from the “communion of saints?” What dost thou when thou sayest, “I believe the communion of saints,” but say, ‘I am a dissembling hypocrite,’ if it be thus with thee ?

6. You all profess to “believe the forgiveness of sins ;” that is, that through the blood of Christ all true repenting and believing sinners shall be forgiven, and are not shut up under remediless despair ; and also I think you all profess that you do repent yourselves, that forgiveness may be yours ; and yet you love your sin ; you love not to be told of it ; you will not believe it to be sin, as long as you can strive against conviction ; and when you must needs confess it, you will not forsake it ; but while you seem to reform by parting with so much as you can spare, your dearer sins, which pleasure and honour and profit are much engaged in, you will not forsake ; though repentance do consist in turning from sin to God, and Christ hath assured you that “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) Is not this, therefore, palpable hypocrisy, to profess repentance for remission of sin, and still keep the sin which you say you repent of, as if you thought to mock God with names and shows ?

7. You all profess to “believe the resurrection of the body, and that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead ;” but do you live as men that believe it indeed, that they are passing unto such a judgment ? If you seriously expected to be judged for your lives, for the words you speak, the deeds you do, the time you spend, the means of grace which you neglect or use, and for all that you receive and do, is it possible you could so waste your time, and neglect the means of your salvation, and sin so boldly and obstinately as you do ?

8. You all profess that you “believe the life everlasting,” that the righteous shall go into their Master’s joy, and the rest into everlasting punishment in hell. (Matt. xxv. 13.) But do you not play the hypocrites ? Can you heartily believe that you stand so near to heaven or hell, to everlasting joy or torments, and make no greater a matter of it, nor make no better preparation for it, nor bestir yourselves no more in a case of such unspeakable weight ? If you believe sincerely the glory of Heaven, you set your hearts on it more than upon Earth,

and take it for your portion, and most desirable felicity. But do I need to tell the worldly, fleshly hypocrite how far he is from this.

9. You profess, as the sum of the ten commandments, that you love God above all, and your neighbours as yourselves. But doth not your selfishness, and quarrelling with your neighbours, when they do but stand in the way of your honour or commodity, convince you of hypocrisy in this profession?

10. In the use of the Lord's Prayer, what word do you speak that is not in hypocrisy? Do you first and principally desire the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will? when you are far more tender of your own names than of God's, and more regardful of your own honour? And when you care more for your own prosperity than for the prosperity of the church and gospel, and do yourselves become the hinderers of his kingdom and government in the church and in the souls of men? And when you cannot abide to do his will, when it crosseth the interest of your flesh, but dislike it as too strict, and had rather the word and will of God were agreeable to yours, than you will conform your own to his?

Do you only desire your daily bread, and that in subordination to the honour, and kingdom, and will of God. Or rather do you not play the hypocrites in saying so, when it is not daily bread that will content you; but plenty and prosperity is sweeter to you than holiness?

When you pray for "the forgiveness of your sins, as you forgive others," you intimate that you are weary of your sins, and hate them, and would forsake them; and that you forgive all that have wronged you, out of the sense of your own transgressions, and of the love of Christ. But is all this so, or is it mere dissembling, when you forsake not your sin, nor are willing to forsake it, and when your consciences know that there be some that you forgive not?

You pray against "being led into temptation," and yet you love it, and cast yourselves into it. Into tempting company, and tempting talk, and tempting employments. And for recreation, meat, drink, apparel, houses, attendants, estate, reputation, and almost all things else, you love and choose that which is most tempting.

You pray to be "delivered from evil," when the evil of your pride, flesh-pleasing, and worldliness, you so love, that indeed

you would not be delivered from them. What can you say to excuse all this from palpable hypocrisy.

To conclude, you pretend to all that is necessary to salvation, but have you that in reality which you pretend to?

1. You think yourselves wise enough to be saved. But is it not folly that goes under the name of wisdom? When you should be converted, and lead a holy life, you are wise enough to give reasons for the contrary, and wise enough to confute the preacher, and prove him a fool, instead of obeying the call of God. You are wise enough to prove the physician to be ignorant, and to cast away the medicine that should heal you. And what if nobody could deal with you in subtlety of argument, but you could say that against the necessary means of your own salvation, that none can answer? When you die by your wisdom, and have disputed yourselves out of the reach of mercy, will you not bewail it then as folly? Is he wiser, that, being hungry, eats his meat, or he that gives such reasons for his refusing it, and pleadeth so learnedly against eating and drinking, that none can answer him? Is the condemned man wiser that makes friends for a pardon, or he that with unanswerable subtlety reasoneth against it, till the ladder be turned? Such is your vain and seeming wisdom. You are not wise enough to be cured, but to give reasons why you should continue sick. In the issue, it will prove that you were not wise enough to be saved, but notably wise to resist salvation, and plead yourselves into hell.

2. You pretend that you have a saving faith, when your hearts refuse that salvation from sin, and that rule of Christ which is the object of faith, and when you will not believe the doctrines, precepts, or threatenings that cross your own conceits; and when your belief of heaven will not carry your hearts from earth, nor work you to a holy, heavenly life.

3. You pretend to repentance, as I said before, while you hold fast the sin, and give not up yourselves to God; when as if your neighbour, or master, or husband, should but beat one of you, and tell you when he hath done that he repenteth, and do this as often as you commit your wilful sins, and say you repent, I am confident you would not take it for true repentance. You repent, but will not confess when it is to your disgrace, as long as you can hide your sin. You repent, but will not make restitution or reparation of injuries to your power. You repent, but your heart riseth against him that

reproveth you. You repent, but you had rather keep your sins than leave them. What is this but to deceive your own hearts, and to mock yourselves with a seeming, vain, and mock repentance?

4. You pretend to love God above all, (as was before said,) when you love not his image, ways, or communion, but love that which he hateth, and still prefer the world before him.

5. You pretend that you have true desires to be godly, and what God would have you be; but they are such desires as the sluggard hath to rise, and as the slothful hath to work: that is, if it could be done with ease, and without labour; you lie still, and use not the means with diligence for all your desires. When you can sit and have your work done with wishes, and your families maintained, and your necessities all supplied with wishes, you may think to come to heaven with wishes. The good desires that the poor may be warmed, and clothed, that James speaks of, (Jam. ii. 15,) did neither relieve the poor, nor save the wisher. "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour." (Prov. xxi. 25.) Up and be doing according to thy desires, or else confess that thy wishes are hypocritical, and that thou deceivest thy own heart by vain desires.

6. You also pretend to be sincere worshippers of God. You pray, and you read the Scripture, and good books, and you hear the word, and receive the Lord's supper. But I have before shown you your hypocrisy in these; you pray against the sin that you love and would not leave; you pray for holiness, when you hate it, or desire it not in any degree to cross your flesh; you serve God, with mere words (whether of your own conceiving or of others' prescribing) with some forced acknowledgment of that God that hath not your hearts or lives. Let Christ pass the sentence on you, and not me: (Matt. xv. 7—9.) "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'" You like that teaching that soothes you in your own opinions, and galleth not your consciences in the guilty place. A minister you would have, that should stand like an adorned idol that hurts nobody, and toucheth not your sores; or that is but like a pair of organs, or a tinkling cymbal, to tickle your fancy, and make church worship to be as a kind of religious stage-

play to you. But a true minister of Christ, to open to you the doctrine of the kingdom, and roundly to awaken you from security in sin, and to call you up to the most serious, holy, heavenly life, and follow you, and let you take no rest, till you yield and practise it; and to call you to open confession of your open scandalous sins, that you may make such reparation to the wronged honour of God and souls of men, as you are capable of; and accordingly to absolve you, or to bind you over to answer it at the bar of God, and charge the Church to avoid communion with you, if you are impenitent and incorrigible; such a minister as this (which is the minister of Christ's appointment) you abhor; at least, when he comes to touch your sores. Then you are too proud to be taught and ruled by such as these, though you hypocritically profess to be ruled by Christ, who ruleth his Church by his Spirit, word, and ministers, conjunct. Then you say, 'Who gave you authority to do thus and thus by me?' As if you knew not that Christ in Scripture hath described, confirmed, and limited the ministerial office. Like condemned traitors, that should say to him that bringeth them a pardon, 'Who gave you authority to make so bold with me?' or like a man that hath the plague or leprosy, that asketh the physician, 'Who gave you authority to tell me that I am sick, and put me to such medicines as these?' or as the Israelite to Moses, (Exod. ii. 14,) "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" "not understanding that God by his hand would deliver them," saith Stephen; (Act. vii. 25;) or as the Jews to Christ, when he was teaching men the way to heaven, (Matt. xxi. 23,) "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" So because you hate the way of your recovery, you will not be saved without authority, nor be satisfied of their authority that would save you, but are like a beggar that should proudly refuse a piece of gold, and ask, 'By what authority do you give it me?' A minister that agreeth with God's description you cannot abide. (Acts xx. 18—36; Heb. xxiii. 7, 17; 1 Cor. iv. 1; 1 Thes. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. v. 17, 20, and 2 Tim. iv. 1.) So that, indeed, it is but a mock-minister, a mock-sacrament, a mock-prayer, and so a seeming, vain religion which you desire.

7. Lastly, you pretend also to sincere obedience. If we ask you, whether you are willing to obey God? you will say, God forbid that any should deny it. But when it comes to the particulars, and you find that he commandeth you that which flesh and blood is against, and would cost you the loss of worldly

prosperity, then you will be excused; and yet, that you may cheat your souls, you will not professedly disobey; but you will persuade yourselves that it is no duty, and, that God would not have you do that which you will not do. Like a countryman's servant, that promiseth to do all his master bids him; but when he cometh to particulars, thrashing is too hard work, and mowing and reaping are beyond his strength, and ploughing is too toilsome; and in conclusion, it is only an idle life with some easy chargs, that he will be brought to. This is the hypocrite's obedience. He will obey God in all things, as far as he is able, in the general: but when it comes to particulars, to deny himself, and forsake his worldly prosperity for Christ, and to condemn the world, and live by faith, and converse in heaven, and walk with God, and worship him in spirit and truth, to love an enemy, to forgive all wrongs, to humble himself to the meanest persons, and to the lowest works; to confess his faults with shame and sorrow, and ask forgiveness of those he has injured; these and other such works as these he will not believe to be parts of obedience, or at least, will not be brought to do them.

Poor souls, I have stood here a great while to hold you the glass, in which, if you were willing, you might see yourselves. But if you will yet wink, and hate the light, and perish in your self-deceiving, who can help it?

Briefly and plainly, be it known to thee again, whoever thou art that hearest this, that if thou have not these five characters following, thy religion is all but vain and self-deceiving.

1. If God's authority, as he speaketh by his Spirit, word, and ministers, be not highest with thy soul, and cannot do more with thee than Kings and Parliaments and than the world and flesh. (Matt. xxiii. 8—10.)

2. If the unseen everlasting glory be not practically more esteemed by thee, and chosen, and sought, than any thing, or all things in the world. (Matt. vi. 21; Col. iii. 2; John vi. 27; 2 Tim. iv. 8, 9; Matt. xxii. 5; Luke xviii. 22, 23; Phil. iii. 20.)

3. If thou see not such a loveliness in holiness, as being the image of God, as that thou unfeignedly desirest the highest degree of it. (Matt. v. 20; Psalm cxix. 1—3, &c.; Phil. iii. 12—14.)

4. If any sin be so sweet and dear to you, or seem so necessary, that you consent not and desire not to let it go. (Matt. xix. 22; Phil. iii. 8; Psalm lxvi. 18.)

5. If any known duty seem so costly, dangerous, troublesome, and unpleasant, that ordinarily you will not do it. (Matt. xvi. 24—26 ; Psalm cxix. 6.)

In a word, God must be loved and obeyed as God ; Christ must be entertained as Christ ; Heaven must be valued and sought as Heaven ; and holiness loved and practised as holiness ; though not to the height of their proper worth (which none on earth is able to reach,) yet so, as that nothing be preferred before them.

But yet there is one more discovery, which, if I pass by, you will think I baulk a chief part of my text.

An unbridled tongue in a professor of religion is enough to prove his religion vain.

By an unbridled tongue is not meant all the sins of our speech. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. For in many things we offend all." (Jam. iii. 2.) Every unwarrantable jest, or angry word, or hasty, rash expression, is not enough to prove a man's religion to be in vain. Though Christ says that we shall "answer for every idle word," he doth not say, "we shall be condemned for every idle word." But when the tongue is unbridled, and is not kept under a holy law, but suffered to be the ordinary instrument of wilful known sin, or of gross sin, which men might know and will not ; this proves the person void of holiness, and, consequently, his religion vain.

It is true, every hypocrite hath not an unbridled tongue : some of them have the bridle of moral precepts, and some of religious education, and some of the presence and awe of persons whom they esteem ; common knowledge, with natural mansuetude and moderation doth bridle the tongues of many an hypocrite ; but as every wicked man is not a drunkard, or fornicator, and yet every drunkard or fornicator (that liveth in it) is a wicked man ; so every hypocrite hath not an unbridled tongue, (his vice may be some other way ;) but every man that hath an unbridled tongue is an hypocrite, if withal he profess himself a Christian.

The sins of the tongue are of three sorts. 1. Such as are against piety. 2. Such as are against justice. 3. Such as are against charity.

1. Against piety, that is, directly against God, are blasphemy, perjury, rash swearing, swearing by creatures, light and unrepentant using of God's name and attributes, and words and works ;

pleading for false doctrine, or false worship, disputing against truth and duty; scorning at godliness, or reasoning against it. These and such impieties of the tongue, are the evidences of profaneness in the speaker's heart; though some of them much more than others; and if the tongue is not here bridled, all is in vain.

2. Sinful speeches against justice and charity are these:—reproaching parents, or governors, or neighbours; railing and reviling, cursing, provoking others to do mischief, or commit any sin, disputing against and dissuading men from truth and duty; and hindering them by your speeches from a holy life, and the means of their salvation; calling good, evil, and evil, good; lying, slandering, false-witness bearing, backbiting; extenuating men's virtues, and aggravating their faults beyond the certain apparent truth; receiving, and reciting, and carrying on evil reports, which you know not to be true; endeavouring to cool men's love to others, by making them seem bad, when we cannot prove it, mentioning men's faults and failings without a call and just occasion; unchaste, immodest, ribald speeches; cheating and deceitful words to wrong others in their estates; with other such like.

But undoubtedly that sin of the tongue which the Apostle here had particular respect to, was the reproaching of fellow-Christians, especially upon the occasion of some differences of judgment and practice in the smaller matters of religion; the Judaizing Christians gave liberty to their tongues to reproach those that refused the use of those ceremonies which they used themselves, and placed much of their religion in; the quarrel was the same that was decided by the Apostles, Acts xv., and by Paul, Romans xiv. and xv., and throughout the Epistle to the Galatians. And this is the religion that James calls vain here, which was much placed in ceremonies, with a pretence of highest knowledge, and a censorious vilifying of all that would not do as they.

There are especially three sorts that use to reproach each other about the matters of religion.

1. Those that are hardened to that height of impiety, as to make a mock at seriousness and diligence in the practice of Christianity itself, hating and reproaching them that dare not sell their souls at as base a price as they.

2. Those that have so far extinguished charity by faction and self-conceit, as to confine their love and honour to their party, and to speak evil of those that are not of their own opinions.

3. Those that give liberty to their tongues unseasonably, unmeasurably, or unwarrantably to speak hardly of those that they suffer by upon religious accounts ; though, perhaps, they are their superiors whom they are bound to honour.

1. The first sort are arrived at such a measure of maliciousness and misery, that they are as mad men, the objects of compassion to all men save themselves. Their sin and misery is so notorious, that I need not say anything to discover it to others that have anything of reason and true religion ; and for themselves, being so far forsaken of God, as to hate and reproach the means of their salvation, no wonder if withal they are given over to that blindness as not to understand the words that should convince them, and neither to see their shame, nor the light that would discover it ; and to such impenitency, as not to feel or fear the wrath and threatenings of the Almighty ; but boldly to rage on, till hell hath brought them to their wits. (Prov. xiv. 16.) “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil, but the fool rageth, and is confident.” Yet this much, briefly, I shall say to these, if any of them be this day my auditors, that I may not leave them as utterly past hope.

1. Thou art one of the most self-condemned, stigmatized, slaves of Satan, in the world. Thou bearest openly so undoubted a brand of wickedness, that there is no room for any rational hope in thy self, or any of thy friends, that ever thou shouldest be saved, if thou die in such a state ; some hope is left that yet thou mayest be converted, but none that thou shouldest be saved without conversion. It is possible with God that can do all things, that yet thy wilful blindness may be cured, and thy tongue may unsay all that thou hast said ; and thou mayest cry out of thy folly, and cry shame against thyself, for that which now thou gloriest in. It is possible for God of such a stone to make a child of Abraham ! and to melt that hardened heart of thine, and lay it bleeding at the feet of Christ, and to make thee wish with tears or groans, that such thoughts had never entered into thy heart, nor such words of malice proceeded from thy mouth. And happy art thou, if God will have so much mercy on thee, that hast derided mercy, as to vouchsafe thee such a change. And pray for it, and pray hard, and pray again, if thou love thy soul ; for this is thy hope, and thou hast no other. For that ever such a wretch as thou shouldest be saved, in the state that now thou art in, is as impossible as for God to lie, and as impossible as for the devils to be saved. I

wonder (but that such a forsaken soul is a senseless block, and as a lifeless carcass,) that thou dost not quake with the fears of hell, which way ever thou goest; and that thou art not still thinking whither thou art going, and how the devils are ready to take thy soul as soon as death hath opened the door and let it out into Eternity? As carelessly or scornfully as thou sittest here, I wonder that thou dost not tremble to consider, where it is that thou must shortly be, and where thou must abide for ever. It is one of the most notable discoveries of the powerful craft of Satan, that he is able to keep such a garrison as thy heart in so much peace, and to quiet a poor wretch that is uncertain to be one hour out of hell! that thy sleep is not broken with terrible dreams, and that thou dost not eat thy meat in terrors, and that ever a smile should be seen in thy face! that thy business, or company, or sports, or pleasures, should once put out of thy mind thy endless misery. While I am speaking, and thou art hearing, hell-fire is burning, and the devils are waiting, and, thy blinded soul is posting on, and, for aught thou knowest, may be there this night. Poor sinner! for my part, I know thee not! and, therefore, cannot justly be suspected to bear thee any ill will, or to speak these words with a desire of thy hurt. I know this is language that the guilty do not love to hear. But I must tell thee, who reproachest and deridest a serious, holy life, that, except the blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, there are few in the world in more certain misery than thou. Other sinners, though miserable, may have some cloak to hide their misery. Though the drunkard shall not enter into heaven, he may flatter himself with the remembrance that Noah was once overtaken with that sin. Though the fornicator or adulterer shall not enter into the kingdom of God, (Eph. v. 5,) he may cheat himself awhile with the remembrance of David's guilt. Though the false-hearted, temporizing, self-saving hypocrite shall not be saved, he may deceive himself, by the instance of Peter's denying his master, and his dissimulation, (Gal. ii.,) but what cloak hast thou to hide thy misery? Did ever any true disciple of Christ either hate or reproach his servants and his ways? What godly man hath made a mock at godliness (unless it were when he was ungodly?) If any should think that an act of drunkenness or fornication might consist with grace, no man that understands himself can think that a scorner at an holy life, hath himself the holiness which he scorneth! I would not for a world be in the case of that wretch, that speaks well of

holiness in others, while he lives in fornication, luxury, or worldliness himself, though he think that he cuts scores by daily crying to God for mercy. But I would much less for a thousand worlds be in the case of him that neither is godly, nor can speak well of it; that is not only void of the Spirit of Christ, but speaks against it; that is not only void of the holy image of God, but hateth it, and reproacheth it in others. O rather let me have no tongue to speak, no soul to think, than ever I should speak or think thus maliciously of the image, and ways, and servants of the Lord! I had rather be a dog, or a toad, than one of those men that use to mock at serious, diligent serving of the Lord, or that maliciously reproach his servants, and bend their wits and tongues against them; so legibly is the mark of the devil upon them, that I must needs tell you that are true believers, you are much to be blamed that you look not on them with more compassion, and weep not for them, as for men that are within a step of hell, when you hear them rail at the laws or servants of the Lord. I mean those of whom the Apostle saith, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, (that is, to the self-denying mortified state of Christians, and following him even through sufferings,) whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) "That not only do wickedly, but teach men so to do;" (Matt. v. 19.) "and have pleasure in them that do it;" (Rom. i. 32;) "and think it strange that we run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." (1 Pet. iv. 4, 5.)

2. Thou bearest most eminently the image of the devil, and most expressly speakest his mind, and art most openly employed in his works. What is the devil but an apostate spirit, filled with enmity against God and his servants, and hating holiness; the malicious accuser of the brethren, slandering and reproaching them, and seeking their destruction! And shall a malicious, lying sinner live, that imitateth Satan in his enmity to God? O that thou knewest whom thou servest! And that thou knewest whom thou speakest against! Woe be to him that striveth with his Maker. (Isa. xlv. 2.) It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. (Acts ix. 5.) Whoever hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? (Job ix. 4.) If Satan were to speak with open face, what would he say, but as the tongues of the malici-

ous enemies of holiness; even to speak evil of the ways and servants of the Lord? Might he appear and speak himself in the assemblies and councils of the great ones of the earth, he would speak against the same men, and to the same purpose, as those that I have described. Your tongues are his instruments. You speak what he secretly suggesteth, as verily as if he had written you your instructions, and you had read it in his words: he hateth holiness, and, therefore, he tempteth you to hate it. He would bring it into hatred in the world, and, therefore, he speaks disgracefully of it by your tongues. His will is your will; and your words are his words; and the pleasantest music that you could make him. O how it pleaseth him to make a reasonable creature reproach the word and ways of the Creator! How eager was he to have got Job to have spoken evil of God!

3. Be it known to thee, thou reviler, that if ever thou be saved thyself, it must be in that way that thou revilest. Thy hope lieth in it. As sure as thou livest, there is no other way to life eternal. Without holiness none shall see God. (Heb. xii. 14.) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matt. v. 8.) When thou hast done all, thou must come back, and go that way thyself, or burn for ever. Either thou must be such as those that thou dost speak against, or thou art everlastingly undone. And if thou think to be such a one thyself, and to come to heaven by the very way that now thou dost revile, canst thou yet revile it? And if thou perish in hell for want of holiness, thou shalt then have enough of thy rebellion. Then thou shalt cry out against thy own malicious reproaches a thousand times more than ever thou didst against the servants of the Lord. Though the very distinction between the godly and ungodly be now thy scorn, yet I shall be bold to tell thee, in the words of Enoch, yea of God, (Jud. xiv. 16,) "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Now you have your day, and judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God! And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.) "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the

seat of the scornful ! But his delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” “ The ungodly are not so : but like the chaff which the wind driveth away : therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous : for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” (Psal. i.) This is scripture distinction, which God will make good.

I make no question, but the worst of you will put by all this in your self-deceit, and say, it is not holiness that we speak against, but it is hypocrisy, or schism, or some such accusation that malice shall suggest, will be your mask. But will you answer me these few questions.

Quest. 1. Why then do you not imitate them so far as they do well ? Why are you not as much in works of holiness as they ? In reading, and meditating on the word of God, in holy conference, and secret prayer, and instructing your families, &c. And then leave them, and spare not where they do amiss.

Quest. 2. Why do you not hate the sins of the notoriously ungodly, who show them without shame ? Nay, why do you make such men your companions ?

Quest. 3. Why go you to the heart, that is unseen, and arrogate the prerogative of God, to censure men of hypocrisy, and such secret sins that are out of your discerning ? If you know your heart by outward actions, insist upon your proofs.

Quest. 4. Why speak you not of their good as well as of the supposed evil ? Why are you not more in speaking well of what is well, than in speaking ill of what is ill ?

Quest. 5. Why is it that you speak of men that you know not ? And of others that are innocent, for the sake of those you imagine to be guilty ? And why do you so greedily snatch at any matter of reproach, and take it by hearsay from the most ignorant, rash, or malicious mouths.

Quest. 6. If it be hypocrisy, or other vice, that you so hate, why do you not hate them in yourselves ? Why live you so viciously while you profess obedience to the Lord ? And why do you take on you to believe a heaven and hell hereafter, and to give up yourselves in covenant to God, and live so contrary to that professed belief and covenant ?

Quest. 7. Do you not feel that it is partly malice, and partly the recrimination of a guilty galled conscience, that fain would steal a little peace by thinking others to be as bad as you ?

I shall dismiss this unhappy sort of men with these two requests : 1. You are the men that of all others have the most notable advantage from your conviction, of the misery of your present state : and therefore, I beseech you, take that advantage. One would think it should be the easiest matter in the world, for such as you to know that you are ungodly, that hate godliness and oppose it. You have no plausible pretence for self-flattery or self-deceit. And therefore confess your misery, and look out to Christ, for help and pardon, while there is hope and time.

2. For the time to come, will you but try a serious, holy life before you speak against it any more ? For shame, speak not evil of the things you know not, as those brutes described, Jud. x. And holiness was never well known but by experience. O that you would be entreated but to yield to this most equal motion ! Away with your worldly, fleshly lives ; and live in faith and holiness, a just, a spiritual, and a heavenly life, but one year, or one quarter, or one month, and then if, by experience, you find just cause for it, reproach a holy life, and spare not.

II. To the second sort, (that speak evil of men upon differences of opinion, especially while they profess the same religion, in all the essential, necessary parts,) I shall propose these aggravations of their sin, for their humiliation.

1. Consider, can you think it agreeable to the law of Christ, to reproach men behind their backs, and unheard, for that which you never soberly and christianly told them to their faces ? Did you lovingly first admonish them, and impartially hear what they can say for themselves ? What is your end in speaking against your brother ? Is it to do him hurt, or good ? If hurt, be sure you do him justice ; and backbiting is not the way of justice. If good, you cross your own intention. For what good can it do him, that another hears him evil spoken of ?

2. If you are Christ's disciples, it must be known to all men by your special love to one another. (John xiii. 25.) And is reproach and evil speaking the fruit or evidence of such love ? Can you talk so of the friends that are most dear to you, or that you love indeed ? How do our hearts rise against that man, that speaks reproachfully of our dearest friends ! Love would scarce suffer you to endure such abuse of Christians in another, without a serious reprehension : much less to be the abuser of them yourselves.

3. Your evil speaking of your brethren destroyeth love in others, as it proves the want of it in yourselves. And to destroy their love is to destroy their souls. You do your worst to quench the love, both of him that you speak evil of, and of them to whom you speak it. Good is the object of love; and therefore to speak [well] of men, and manifest them to be lovely, is the only way to make them loved. Evil is the object of hatred: and therefore to speak evil of them, is to make them seem hateful, and draw men to the guilt of hating them. To praise a man will do more to make him loved, than if you only entreat another to love him; and to dispraise a man will do more to make him hated, than if you directly persuade another to hate him. And what service you do the devil, and what disservice unto Christ, by destroying love, and sowing hatred among his servants, were you impartial you might easily discern.

4. Is it not shame and pity, that the followers of Christ should imitate the devil, and ungodly men, as by detraction and reviling words they do? You aggravate your brethren's faults; and find faults where there are none; and so do Satan and ungodly men. You have a secret desire to make them seem contemptible and vile; and so have Satan and ungodly men. And hereby you seem to justify the wicked, and encourage them in their reproaching. They think they may boldly speak such a language of you all, as they hear you speak of one another. O what pity is it to hear the professed children of the Lord, to use the hell-bred language of his enemies, as if they had gone to school to Satan!

4. Are there not tongues enough sharpened against us in the world, but we must wound each other with our own? Is it not enough, if we are the seed of Christ, that every where the serpent's seed do hate us; and that all manner of evil is falsely spoken of us, and that we are not made as the scorn and the offspring of all things, but we must also hate and reproach each other? Have you not load enough from the world? Have you not enemies enough to do the work of enemies, but friends must do it? And hath not Satan instruments and tongues enough of his own, but we must use those that are Christ's against himself?

6. If thou hate thy brother, yet sure thou dost not hate thyself. Why then dost thou hurt and shame thyself? His hurt is but to be defamed, which is little, if any thing at all (for it is much in himself whether it shall hurt him.) But thy hurt

that doeth it, is to provoke God against thee, and incur his wrath, and wound thy soul by the guilt of sin. And if another hurt thee in the heel, wilt thou therefore stab thyself to the heart? If another be bad, wilt thou become so by unjust defaming him? And how dost thou cross thine own intentions? The stone that thou castest at him, flies back in thy face. Thou proclaimest thy own transgression and shame, when thou art uncharitably proclaiming his. Is not a backbiter, a reviler, is not a malicious calumniator, a worse name (which thou takest to thyself) than that which thou canst fasten on him whom thou dost reproach?

7. Thy uncharitable speeches are a dangerous sign of an unhumbled and unpardoned soul. If thou canst not forgive, thou art not forgiven. Did you know yourselves, it would teach you to deal more compassionately with others. You would have the act of oblivion as extensive as you could, if you knew what danger you are in yourselves. Do you not know as much by yourselves as you have to reproach your brother with? Do you not then invite both God and man to take you at the worst, and use you as you use your brother? Methinks you should rather be desirous of a more tender and indulgent way, as knowing what need yourselves have of it.

If you say, O but he hath done thus and thus against me. Let conscience say what you have done yourselves against God and others. If you say, he is a schismatic, an hypocrite, or this or that; remember that malice is blind, and never wants matter of accusation or reproach, and innocency is no defence against it: else Christ and his prophets and apostles had been better used by the world. And ask conscience whether more than you can truly say of him, may not be said against yourselves. If all such must be defamed, how infamous will you be?

8. If you will speak ill, you must hear ill. You teach men how to use you. "*Si mihi pergit quæ vult dicere, quæ non vult audiet.*"

"*Benedictis si certasset, audisset bene,*" saith the comedian. And God usually in justice suffereth it to be. And as those that by violence trample down others, when they feel themselves; on the higher ground, do oft live to be trampled on themselves; so those that take their advantages to insult and defame others, do usually live to be defamed. "For with what

measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. Judge not therefore, that ye be not judged." (Matt. vii. 1, 2.)

To which of these two former ranks you should refer the common names of scorn that religious persons have been most loaded with among us, you must judge by the particular occasion and person. It is not my intention or desire to plead for any faction, disobedience, irregularity, or hypocrisy; much less to palliate heresies or odious crimes that are cloaked with the name or profession of religion. It is the hypocrite that I am all this while detecting. But I must say that it hath been the highest brand or character of hypocrisy and impudent profaneness conjunct; and one of the most crying transgressions of this land, that men, baptized into the name of Christ, have made a scorn at the diligent serving of him, and lived in the hatred of that religion in the life and practice, which themselves profess. And that if upon some small circumstantial differences, any of their superiors have encouraged them to use any nickname of reproach against their most conscientious brethren, they have been glad of the occasion, and used those reproaches against the serious practice of religion, which others pretend to use only against men's different opinions, which they account their exorbitancies or mistakes. How the names of zealots, precisians, puritans, and such like, have been used in this land; and what sort of people have been made thereby (and by the discountenance of those that should have cherished a diligent, holy life) to be the common scorn; and how great a hinderance this hath proved to the salvation of many thousand souls, is a thing that is much more sad to mention, than difficult to prove. And when one nickname is grown out of use, the serpentine enmity watcheth for the opportunity that is afforded by differences and discountenance of the times, to take up another that may have a sharper sting. The dead form of religion, and as much as you will of words and shows, they can reverence or endure: but life, and seriousness, and practice, is the thing they hate. Just like a bear, or other ravenous creature, that will let their prey alone while it seem dead and stirs not; but if it stir, they leap upon it, and tear it into pieces. And therefore it is that the diligent zealous exercise of religion among the Papists, by images, and tautologies, and lifeless ceremonies and forms, is not half so much hated or reproached by the vulgar, as the serious exercise of unquestionable duties, that all are

in words agreed in, is here with us. To pray in our families ; to instruct our children or servants in the necessary points of faith and duty ; to exhort a drunkard, a swearer, a covetous person, or other ungodly ones to repent, and to give up themselves to a holy life ; to take up any serious speech of death and judgment, and the life to come, and the necessary preparations thereto ; these and such like are the odious marks of a zealot, a precisian, or puritan, with the ungodly rabble : so that serving the great and glorious God is with them become a matter of scorn ; while serving the devil is taken for their glory, if they can but do it in the plausible less, disgraceful mode.

But because some of the chief accusers of the brethren would needs persuade men, that the ordinary usage of the forementioned nicknames hath been less impious and more justifiable, against a sort of people only whom they feign to be unfit for human society, I shall only appeal now to the godly bishops, and conformable ministers, that mention it.

Bishop G. Downname (who, though he had written so much for bishops, hath written as much to prove the Pope to be the Antichrist) in his sermon called Abraham's Trial, p. 72, saith : "And even in these times, the godly live among such a generation of men, as that if a man do but labour to keep a good conscience in any measure, though he meddle not with matters of state, or discipline, or ceremonies ; (as for example, if a minister diligently preach, or in his preaching seek to profit, rather than to please, &c.—Or if a private Christian makes conscience of swearing, sanctifying the sabbath, frequenting sermons, or abstaining from the common corruptions of the time) he shall straightway be condemned for a puritan, and consequently be less favoured, than either a carnal gospeller, or a close papist." &c. Such were the times then.

Dr. Robert Abbot, public professor of divinity in Oxford, and after bishop of Salisbury, in a sermon on Easter-day, 1615, saith : "That men, under pretence of truth, and preaching against the puritans, strike at the heart and root of faith and religion, now established among us : that this preaching against the puritans was but the practice of Parson's and Campian's counsel, when they came into England to seduce young students ; and when many of them were afraid to lose their places if they should professedly be thus, the counsel they then gave them was, that they should speak freely against the puritans, and that should suffice," &c. So he.

Of Archbishop Laud's tract of Doctrinal Puritanism, drawn up for, and presented to, the Duke of Buckingham, see Pryne, in his Tryal, p. 156. Divers bishops have affirmed the Jesuits were the masters of this nickname here in England, and the promoters of it.

But of the common sense of this word, and the use of it, I shall now call in no more witnesses but Mr. Robert Bolton, a man that frequently published his judgment for conformity to prelacy and ceremonies; in his Discourse of Happiness, p. 163, he thus speaketh :

“I am persuaded there was never poor persecuted word, since malice against God first seized on the damned angels, and the graces of heaven dwelt in the heart of man, that passed the mouths of all sorts of unregenerate men, with more distastefulness and gnashing of teeth than the name of puritan doth at this day ; which notwithstanding as it is now commonly meant (N. B.) and ordinarily proceeds from the spleen and spirit of profaneness, and good fellowship, as an honourable nickname, that I may so speak, of Christianity and grace. And yet for all this I dare say, that there is none of them all, but when they shall come unto their beds of death, and are to grapple immediately with the painful terrors of the king of fears, and to stand or fall to the dreadful tribunal of the living God,—then (except the Lord suffer them to fall into the fiery lake with senseless hearts and seared consciences) would give ten thousand worlds, were they all turned into gold, pleasures, and imperial crowns, to change their former courses of vanity, &c., into a life of holy preciseness, strictness, sincerity, and salvation. Oh ! when the heavens shall shrivel together like a scroll, and the whole frame of nature flame about their ears ; when the great and mighty hills shall start out of their places like frightened men ; and the fearful reprobate cry and call upon this mountain, and that rock, to fall upon him ; when as no dromedary of Egypt, nor wings of the morning, shall be able to carry them out of the reach of thy revenging hand ; no top of Carmel, no depth of sea, or bottom of hell, to hide them from the presence of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; no rock, nor mountain, nor the great body of the whole earth, to cover them from the unresistable power that laid the foundations of them ; no arm of flesh, or armies of angels, to protect them from those infinite rivers of brimstone which shall be kept in everlasting flames by the anger

of God, when their poor and woful souls shall infinitely desire, rather to return into the loathed darkness of not being, and to be hid for ever in the most abhorred state of annihilation, than now to become the everlasting objects of that unquenchable wrath, which they shall never be able to avoid or to abide, and to be chained up by the Omnipotent hand of God among the damned spirits, in a place of flames and perpetual darkness, where is torment without end, and past imagination: I say, at that dreadful day (and that day will come) what do you think would they give for part in that purity which now they persecute? and for the comforts of true-hearted holiness that now they hate? and yet without which (as it will clearly appear, when matters are brought before that high and everlasting Judge) none shall ever see the Lord, or dwell in the joys of eternity. Nay, I verily think there are no desperate despisers of godliness, or formal opposites to grace, which do now hold holiness to be hypocrisy, sanctification singularity, practice of sincerity too much preciseness,—but when the pit of destruction hath once shut its mouth upon them, and they are sunk irrecoverably into that dungeon of fire, would be content, with all their hearts, to live a million of years as precisely as ever saint did upon earth—to redeem but one moment of that torment.” So p. 159. “The common conceit of these men is, that civil, honest men are in the state of grace, and that formal professors are very forward, and without exception, but true Christians indeed, are puritans, irregularists, exorbitants, transcendants to that ordinary pitch of formal piety, which in their carnal comprehensions they hold high enough for heaven: they either conceit them to be hypocrites, and so the only objects for the exercise of their ministerial severity, and the terrors of God; or else, though the Lord may at last pardon perhaps their singularities and excesses of zeal, yet, in the mean time, they dissweeten and vex the comforts and glory of this life, with much unnecessary strictness and abridgment.

“Now, of all others, such prophets as these are the only men with the formal hypocrite; exactly fitted and suitable to his humour; for however they may sometimes declaim boisterously (N. B.) against gross and visible abominations, (and that is well) yet they are no searchers into, nor censurers of, the state of formality; and therefore do rather secretly encourage him to sit faster upon that sandy foundation, than help to draw him forward to more forwardness,” &c.

See also his Description of a puritan, p. 132.

So, in his Direction for Walking with God, p. 172,

“Good fellow-meetings and ale-house revellings, are the drunkard’s delight : but all the while he sits at it, he is perhaps in a bodily fear of the puritan constable.”

Many such passages tell you how the word puritan was commonly interpreted in Oxford, Northamptonshire, and wherever learned and holy Mr. Bolton was acquainted.

And having mentioned his testimony of the use of the word, I shall add somewhat of his discovery of this spirit of malignity and detraction that worketh in the anti-puritans. In his Discourse of Happiness, p. 190, he saith:—

“The reverence and respectful carriage to godly ministers, which may sometimes be found in the formal hypocrite, doth grow towards distaste and disaffection, when they press them by the powerful sense, and piercing application of some quickening scriptures, to a fervency in spirit, purity of heart, preciseness in their walking, supernatural singularity above ordinary and moral perfections, excellency of zeal, and a sacred violence in pursuit of the crown of life : to an holy strictness, extraordinary striving to enter in at the strait gate, and transcendant eminency over the formal righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, to a nearer familiarity with God by prayer, daily examination of conscience, private humiliations, meditation upon the endless duration in a second life ; to a narrow watch over the stirrings and imaginations of the heart, and expression of holiness in all the passages of both their callings, &c.—Points and ponderations of which nature are ordinarily to him as so many secret seeds of indignation, and many times breed in his formal heart, cold affections, exasperation, and estrangement, if not meditation of persecution and revenge. Sanctification, preciseness, purity, holiness, zeal, strictness, power of godliness, spiritual men, holy brethren, saints in Christ, communion of Christians, godly conferences, conceived prayers, sanctifying the sabbath, family exercises, exercise of fasting, and mortifying humiliations, and such like ; are commonly to men of this temporising temper, and luke-warm constitution, terms of secret terror, and open taunting.—And sometimes they villanously sport themselves with them, and make them the matter of their hateful and accursed jests, that so they may keep under as much as they can, in disestimation and contempt, the faithful professors and practisers thereof, whom

naturally they heartily hate, and also seem thereby to bear out the heartless flourishes of their own formality with greater bravery. Hereupon it is, that if they take a child of God but tripping in the least infirmity, (against which too, perhaps, he strives and prays with many tears, &c.) slipping only in some unadvised precipitant passage of his negociations, &c.,—O then they take on unmeasurably! they cry out, these are your men of the Spirit; these are the holy brethren; these are your precise fellows; these are they which make such show of purity and forwardness! you see now what they are, when matters come out, and their dealings are discovered, when it comes to the trial indeed, or to a matter of commodity, &c. Are they not proud? are they not malicious? are they not hard-hearted and covetous as well as others, &c. When by the mercies of God (in their sense) they are neither so nor so; but such censures as these are very often the mere evaporations of pure malice, and the bitter ebullitions and overflowings of their gall,” &c.

And p. 164. “The ordinary conceit which unregenerate men entertain of these (experimental ministers) is—that they are troublers of Israel, preachers of terror, transgressors of policy, unfit to prophesy at Court, or in the King’s Chapel, pestilent fellows, seditious, factionists, born only to disquiet the world, and vex men’s consciences.—In these days of ours especially, which are strangely profane, and desperately nought, in what man soever the power of grace, undaunted zeal, resolute sincerity, are more working, eminent, and remarkable, ordinarily the more and more implacable, outrageous, and inflamed opposites shall that man find, wheresoever he lives.”

And p. 10. “The formal hypocrite is moved to think his state good, and the way of his life to be right, from a prejudice which he conceives from the imputations which the world layeth upon the children of God; such as are pride, hypocrisy, singularity, melancholy, simplicity,” &c.

Page 38. “His form of godliness in his conceit is the only true state of salvation: whatsoever is short of him is profaneness; whatsoever is above him is preciseness. But, when upon his death-bed, he awaketh.”

And Direct. for Walk. p. 131. “The more forward he is in the narrow way, the more furiously is he persecuted by the spite of tongues: the most resolute for God’s glory, and in good causes, is ordinarily railed against, and reviled. The foul spirit

of good fellowship, as they call it, is still foaming out against God's chiefest favourites the foulest censures: that they are hypocrites, humorists, factionists, traitors, pestilent fellows, and all that is nought.—There is no creature that ever God made, not Satan himself excepted, which is more maliciously set against and censured than good men. Neither should any have so bad a name as they, could the hellish mists of virulent tongues obscure and stain the glory of their reputation."

And p. 43. "At this day, professors of the gracious way be in greatest disgrace with the most; and a drunkard, and swaggering good fellow, an usurer, a son or daughter of Belial, shall find more favour, applause, and approbation with the world, than a man which makes conscience of his ways, &c."

Page 350. "They cry, these forward professors will all turn fantastical, familists, anabaptists, arians, any thing; which cry awakes the eye of state jealousy, and so, by an unworthy consequent, draws upon those who are true of heart, even God's best servants, and the king's best subjects, discountenance, suspicions, if not molestations, unnecessarily, causelessly."

And p. 351, 352, out of Austin's Epistles, p. 137, he shows, that it was so in his time. "They every way, and infinitely labour, that when some professors of holiness have foully fallen indeed, or be only so slandered, the world would believe that they are all such; do you not think in his time the world did thus exult and exclaim, or in the like manner, upon Lot's fall? 'Here now you see puritan Lot, who could not endure the good fellowship of the Sodomites, he is now himself seized on by incest: they are all such, I warrant you:'" citing Du Barta's translation by Silvester, p. 412.

Base, busy stranger! com'st thou hither thus
Controller-like, to prate and preach to us?
No puritan, thou shalt not here do so, &c.

Thus you hear, from a conformable divine, how men calling themselves Christians, and being (some of them) formally religious, do prove themselves self-deceiving hypocrites, by their unbridled tongues, in reviling at those as Puritans, and too precise, that will not be self-deceiving formalists as well as they. I shall only add some of Bishop Hall's characters of an hypocrite, that you may see what formality is in the judgment of knowing men.

Page 169. "Walking early up into the city, he turns into

the great church, and salutes one of the pillars on one knee ; worshipping that God which at home he cares not for, while his eye is fixed on some window, or some passenger, and his heart knows not whither his lips go. He rises, and looking about with admiration, complains on our frozen charity, commends the ancient—with the superfluity of his usury, he builds an hospital, and harbours them whom his extortion hath spoiled : so while he makes many beggars, he keeps some. He turneth all gnats into camels, and cares not to undo the world for a circumstance. Flesh on a Friday is more abomination to him than his neighbour's bed. He abhors more not to uncover at the name of Jesus, than to swear by the name of God," &c. So Bishop Hall.

But perhaps you will say, these persons whom you describe, that will make a mock of godliness itself, are not to be numbered with hypocrites, but with the openly profane.

To which I answer, 1. Even these profess themselves to be Christians, and therefore are hypocrites when they are not what they do profess. 2. They persuade themselves that they are as truly godly as those that they reproach, and do not think that it is godliness, indeed, for which they do reproach them, but for engrossing the name or reputation of godliness to themselves, and for some differing manner or way of worship. For this is one of the most notable cheats by which the devil undoes the empty, formal hypocrite ; finding that this man doth own Christianity in his opinion, but is void of the true spirit, and power, and life of Christian religion ; he raiseth some controversies between the serious Christian and the hypocrite, about some controvertible points of doctrine, or about some modes or circumstances of discipline and external worship, and when they fall into two sides, the hypocrite thinks that it is but in these controversies that the difference lies. The question, thinks he, is not whether men should be regenerate, godly, and religious, but whether my way of religion or the puritan's and precisian's be better ! And presently he hence concludes, that indeed it is he that is the more truly religious. For, saith he, my judgment is sound, and the Puritan's is erroneous ; I am of the judgment of the church, which he is against ; the reverend prelates or doctors are more of my side than on his ; I am for order, and he is for confusion and irreverence, and followeth the humours and fancies of his own brain. And thus the devil turneth his eye from the

main difference, and makes him believe that it is these controversies that are all that sets them at a distance. But alas ! man, thou overlookest the point that thy life and soul lieth on. Agree first in the serious hearty entertainment and practice of the substance of that holy truth which you are both in point of opinion agreed in, and do not condemn thyself in the things which thou allowest ; contradict not thy creed and profession by thy fleshly, worldly, negligent, careless, and ungodly life, but love God with all thy heart and might, and first seek his kingdom and his righteousness, which thou confessest thou shouldest do, and then the principal difference is healed, and thou hast escaped the principal danger of thy soul, and then it is not a few circumstantial differences that will divide your hearts, or divide you from each other in the life to come. Men that differ about bishops, and ceremonies, and forms of prayer, may be all true Christians, and dear to one another, and to Christ, if they be practically agreed in the life of godliness, and join in a holy, heavenly conversation. But if you agree in all your opinions and formalities, and yet were never sanctified by the truth, you do but agree to delude your souls, and neither of you will be saved for all your agreement.

III. The third sort to be spoken to, is those that let out their passion in hard speeches against superiors or others, that they think do wrong or persecute them on a religious account. At this time I will suppose the injury be real, and the complaint be just, it yet beseems not Christians to revile.

1. Consider how contrary this is to the example of our Lord ; and that he left us his example in this particular, with a special recommendation for our imitation. When he was falsely accused, and the High Priest urged him to answer for himself, (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63,) he was silent, to show that he could bear a false accusation, without so much as vindicating his innocency by a just defence. O learn both the lesson and motives recommended to you, 1 Pet. ii. 18, to the end. “ Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Here is the description of your duty, and your example. Are you used worse than Christ was used? (Isa. liii. 7, 8.) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. And if you will come to him, and be his disciples, you must learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart, that you may find rest unto your souls. (Matt. xi. 28, 19.)

2. Consider, as our kingdom is not of this world, so we are not to strive for worldly pre-eminence, nor with carnal weapons, but must know that our greatness here is in being the least, and our dignity in being the servants of all; and our gain is by our loss, and our honour by evil reports, and by disgrace, and our advancement by our debasement, and our preferment by being kept from worldly honour, and our joy by sorrow, and our exaltation by humiliation. And therefore it is contrary to our state of faith to murmur at them that deprive us of the pleasures of sense, or the ease and privileges of the flesh. Mark the description of Christianity in the gospel, and see how much of it consisteth in contempt of the esteem and honours of the world, and of all the accommodations and pleasures of the flesh, because of the expectation of the unseen eternal pleasures; and in the forsaking all, and taking up our cross, and following a crucified Christ; and in patience, and meekness, and forbearing and forgiving; and rather than seek either verbal or actual revenge, to give the cloak also to him that takes away our coat, and turn the other cheek to him that smiteth us. Unmortified passion, and untamed nature, will not give some men leave to understand these passages of Christ, but they search for some such figure so to expound them by as shall annihilate the plain and proper sense. Self-love so blindeth men, that when they read these gospel precepts, they feel not their consciences touched and bound by them, but they read them as if they read them not, and retain no more than if it were nonsense which they read. Had the commands aforesaid (of patience, forbearing, and forgiving,) but as much force and efficacy upon the souls of most professors as the com-

mandments have that are against swearing, and cursing, and drunkenness, and fornication ; we should have much better maintained our innocency and our peace, and have more honoured our profession by showing the world Christianity exemplified in its proper, genuine nature and effects.

3. Consider, it is not oppression, persecution, or hard usage that will exempt us from the obligation of the fifth commandment, which requireth us to honour our superiors, our natural, and civil, and ecclesiastical fathers. It is the evil and froward, and not only the good and the gentle, that we must honour and obey. And the reason is plain from their original end. It is not as our trustees, or agents, or friends only, that our rulers must be honoured, but as the officers of the God of heaven ; nor is it only as they do good to us, but as they preserve order and justice in the world, and are the pillars of the Commonwealth. If magistrates should deal ever so hardly with you and me, yet still their office is of necessity to the common good. And if their office be necessary, their honour is necessary, for when they are dishonoured and despised, they are disabled. And therefore, for the common good, we must be careful to keep up the honour of our governors, even when we suffer by them ourselves. Princes were none of the best when the apostles commanded the churches to honour them, and obey them, and this not only for fear of their penalties, but for conscience' sake. (Rom. xiii. 5.) Of old it was they that walked after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, that were presumptuous and self-willed, and despised government, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities ; whereas the angels that are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusations against them before the Lord. (2 Pet. ii. 10, 11 ; Jude 8, 9.)

4. Consider, that reviling is a tongue-revenge, and revenge is God's, and he is engaged to repay, and hath commanded us not to avenge ourselves. As we must not step into the judge's tribunal whenever we think he is negligent in his administrations, so much less must we accuse God of negligence or injustice, by stepping into his throne. And though the railers of these times excuse their sin with the name of justice, they must show their commissions for the executing of that justice, before it will pass in heaven for an excuse. Is not God severe enough ? will not his judgment be terrible enough ? would you wish men to suffer more than he will inflict on the impenitent ? what ! more than hell ? and will it not be soon enough ? are

you so hasty for so dreadful a revenge? can you not stay when the Judge is at the door? Mark both the usage and remedy of believers, in James v. 5—8. To the rich and great ones of the world he saith, “Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter! Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you.” There is your usage. “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.” There is the remedy. But must we stay so long? He thus repeateth his advice: “Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord is at hand.” (Phil. iv. 5.) “Shall not God avenge his own elect, that cry night and day unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.” (Luke xviii. 7, 8.) There is no contradiction between crying long and avenging speedily.

5. Consider what compassion, rather than reproach, you owe to those by whom you suffer. They do themselves much more hurt than they do you. Are they great? They have the more to answer for, and their fall will be the greater. (James v. 1—3.) If you are yourselves believers, go into the sanctuary, and ask the Scriptures what will be their end; and then deny them compassion if you can. Alas! consider they are, at the worst, but such as you were formerly yourselves as to the main. Paul makes a sad confession of his own persecution of the church, when he was before Agrippa, and doth not complain that he was himself so hardly used. “I verily thought,” saith he, “with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. Many of the saints I shut up in prison (little thinking that they were saints); I gave my voice against them, I punished them oft in every synagogue; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them.” (Acts xxvi. 9—12.) He would not tell Agrippa that he was mad, but he might speak more freely of himself. Oh! Sirs, pity poor men who have the temptations of worldly greatness and prosperity, and must go through a camel’s eye if they will come to heaven; who stand so high that sun and wind have the greatest force upon them; who see so much vanity, and little serious exemplary piety; who hear so much flattery and falsehood, and so little necessary truth, saith Seneca, “*Divites cum omnia habeant, unum illis deest; scilicet, qui verum dicat: si enim in cliente-*

Iam felicitis hominis potentumque perveneris, aut veritas, aut amicitia perdenda est." If you were in their places, you know not how far you might be prevailed upon against yourselves. If little temptations can make you miscarry in your places so oft and foully as you do, what would you do if you had the strongest baits of the world, and allurements of the flesh, and the most dangerous temptations that Satan could assault you with? Have you not seen of late before your eyes, how low some have fallen from high professions, and how shamefully the most promising persons have miscarried, that were lifted up and put to the trial of such temptations of prosperity as they had never been used to before? Oh! pity those that have such dangerous trials to pass through, and be thankful that you stand on safer ground; and do not cruelly envy them their perils, nor reproach them for their falls, but pray, and daily pray, for their recovery.

6. Consider this speaking evil of those by whom you suffer, hath too much of selfishness and corrupted nature in it to be good. If another suffered as you do, and you were advanced as another is, would not you speak more mildly then? Or, if not so, yet the proneness of nature to break out into reviling words, though it were for religion and for God, doth intimate to you that it hath a suspicious root. Do you find it as easy to be meek and patient, and forgive a wrong, and love an enemy? Take heed lest you serve Satan in vindicating the cause of God. It is an unfit way of serving God, to do it by breaking his commands. Read seriously the description of a contentious, hurtful, foul-tongued zeal; in James iii., and then tell me what thanks Christ will give you for it. The two great disciples, James and John, thought it would have notably honoured Christ, and curbed the raging spirit of the ungodly, if he would have let them call for fire from heaven, to consume a town that refused to receive him. But doth Christ encourage their destroying zeal? No; but he tells them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." They little knew how unlike to the tender, merciful, healing spirit of Christ that fiery hurting spirit was, that provoked them to that desire, nor how displeasing their temper was to Christ. This is the very case of many thousand Christians that are yet young, and green, and harsh, and have not attained to that mellowness, and sweetness, and measure of charity, that is in grown, experienced Christians. They think their passions and desires of some plagues on the

contemners of the gospel, are acceptable to God, and blame the charitable as too cold, when they little know what spirit it is that raiseth that storm in them, and how unlike, and unacceptable it is to Christ. Were you as zealous to serve all others in love, and to stoop to their feet for their salvation, and to become all things lawful to all men, that you may win some, this saving zeal would be pleasing to your Lord, who comes to do the work of a physician, and not of the soldier, to save, and not to destroy, and therefore most approves of those that serve him most diligently in his saving work.

7. Lastly, consider, your passions and evil speakings will but increase your suffering, and make it seem just, if otherwise it were unjust. If you are not meek, you have not the promise of inheriting the earth. (Matt. v. 5.) If you honour not your parents or superiors, you have not the promise that your "days shall be long in the land." And your evil speaking will make men conclude that you would do evil if you could and durst; as it is said to be Zoilus's answer, when he was asked why he spoke evil of Plato, and such worthy men, "*Quoniam malum facere cum velim non possum*—Because I would do them hurt and cannot." Give not occasion for such a charge.

Finally, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another: love as brethren: be pitiful: be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing; for he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil." (1 Peter iii. 8—11.) "But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, nor be troubled." (ver. 14.)

But I suppose you will here say, 'Is it not lawful to call a spade a spade? Is not a wo against them that call evil good? May not a man speak of the hurtful crimes of others?' I answer, first, Yes, when, as a magistrate, a minister, or a brother, you have just cause to tell them of it lovingly, though plainly, to their faces, in order to their recovery: secondly, and when you have a just call to speak of it to others, either in seeking justice, or in charity and mercy, for the preservation of those that else will be more hurt by the silencing of men's faults, than you do hurt by mentioning them.

But, 1. You may not slander men as guilty of what indeed they are not.

2. You may not make men's faults seem worse than they are.

3. You must endeavour the good of the person as much as you can, while you blame the sin.

4. You must not mention men's faults without a call ; unless the good of himself or others do require it.

5. You must not do it with a revengeful mind, for personal injuries.

6. You must manifest love and compassion in all.

7. You must difference between reigning sins, and human frailties ; and between a course of sin and an unusual fall ; and between a sin repented of, and not repented of ; and must censure but as you find God censure in his word.

8. You must be more ready to speak of the good that is in the same men as you have a call, than of the evil ; and not maliciously stick only in the galled place.

9. Let it be as far as may be to his face.

10. Let it be according to the common rule of equity. Do as you would be done by. Not measuring your duty to others, by a corrupt impatience of bearing such yourselves ; but speaking nothing for matter or manner to another, which you would think unmeet to be spoken to you, if you were in his case.

11. And especially be tender of the honour of superiors, yea, though they were evil, and do you wrong.

12. And foresee the consequence, whether your words are not like to do more hurt than good.

And if still you think that sufferings will justify reviling, contumelious complaints, consider these two causes of your mistake.

1. You make a great matter of a little one. As there is not so great good in the prosperity of the flesh, as worldlings think ; so neither is there so great evil in the loss of it ; what great harm is poverty, imprisonment, reproach, or death ? Nay, you have a promise that all shall work together for your good. (Rom. viii. 28.)

2. You make a strange matter of that which is the ordinary condition of believers, to be hated of all men ; to have all manner of evil spoken falsely of you ; to be persecuted from one city to another ; to be killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter. Do these seem strange matters to you ? Did you never read or hear the Gospel ? nor know the terms of Christ till now ? Did you never read of forsaking all for Christ, if indeed you would be his disciples ? Did you never

count what it must cost you to be saved ? Did you not renounce the world and the flesh in your baptismal, oft-renewed covenant, (1 Peter iv. 12, 13.) “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, as if some strange thing happened to you ; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.” And will you think so strange of smaller matters, as to think they excuse your impatience, and evil speeches ?

By this time you may see, if you are willing to see, that all among us that are not real saints, are hypocrites, if they profess themselves Christians and the servants of God ; and that miserable, ungodly souls, that call such hypocrites, as are more diligent than themselves for their salvation, do but discover their ignorance and malignity, and condemn themselves in betraying their hypocrisy, while they reproach the practice of the same christian religion which themselves profess ; and the obedience to that Scripture which they confess, themselves, to be the word of God. All the profane, and unsanctified among us, that call themselves Christians, are certainly hypocrites. And for the godly it is the very same religion, that is professed by them and you ; it is the same engagement and vow that you all made to God in baptism ; and suffer but reason impartially to tell you, when two men have entered the same covenant, and one never mindeth it so as to keep it ; and the other makes it his chiefest care ; which of these is like to be the dissembler in his covenant ? When two men profess themselves the servants of God, and as such place their hopes in heaven, and one of them makes a jest of sin, and serveth the flesh and world which he hath renounced, and hates those that diligently serve the Lord ; and the other maketh it the principal care and business of his life to serve and please him, insomuch as he is reproached for it, as making more ado about it than he needs ; which of these are hypocrites, and which are serious, in the performing of their covenants, and living according to their profession ? If two servants promise to do your work, and one labour as hard as he can, and the other sit down and deride him for making so much ado, which was it that played the hypocrite in his promise ? If diligence in God’s service be a sign of hypocrisy, then promise-keeping is hypocrisy, and promise-breaking is sincerity ; and then you may transfer the case to God, who will be the rewarder of them only that diligently seek him. (Heb. xi. 6.) And say that it is his faithfulness to break his promises, and his unfaithfulness to keep them. But who will spend words on such impious

absurdities ? so gross, that the devil would [have showed himself a fool to vent them, if he had not made his followers such fools as to believe them. But for the faithful servants of the Lord, let them know, that they must serve him on such terms ; they must live above the judgment and reputation of this world ; and be content that God, the searcher of hearts, shall be their judge, who knoweth both sincerity and hypocrisy ; and will bring forth their righteousness as the light. Christians, you must not only be sincere, but also patiently expect to be accounted hypocrites, and pointed at as the only dissemblers of the world ; you must not only be honest, but patiently expect to be accounted dishonest. You must not only be wise and sober, but patiently expect to be accounted fools and madmen. You must not be liberal, charitable, and contemnners of the world, but patiently expect to be called covetous, even though you give away all that you have. You must not only be chaste and temperate ; but also patiently expect to be defamed as incontinent and licentious, and as Christ was called, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. A minister must not only lay out himself wholly for the saving of men's souls ; and spend himself and all that he hath on his Master's work ; but also patiently expect to be accounted unfaithful, covetous, and negligent, and murmured at by almost all whose unreasonable desires he doth not answer, and be censured by almost all whose wills and humours he doth not fulfil ; and that is, most, that have a self that ruleth at home, and, therefore, they think should be the idol of others, as it is their own ; and that are but unacquainted with the reasons of those things that do displease them. It is little comfort to us to do good, if we cannot bear the estimation of doing evil, and cannot lose all the observation, acknowledgment and applause of man, as if we had never done the good at all. It is far from christian perfection to be honest, and godly, and sincere, if we must needs be accounted to be as we are, and cannot patiently be esteemed dishonest, ungodly, and hypocritical ; and be judged worst when we are best ; what have the servants of Christ lost their lives for in flames, and by other sorts of torments, but for the best of their service, and greatest of their piety and fidelity ? When dogs bark at passengers, commonly it signifieth but two things, namely, that they are persons they know not, or that they hate ; but it is no sign that the persons are bad, or poor, or sick ; for be they never so bad and miserable, if they know them, and love them, the dogs

will not bark at them. See that thou be not an hypocrite, and then it must be accounted a small matter by thee, to be called an hypocrite; yea, if persons that fear God themselves shall so esteem thee, it is no other affliction but what thou must be armed for, and patiently undergo. Even from the godly, through mistake, we often suffer most for our greatest duties, and are censured most for that which God and conscience most approve us for; and lose our reputations for that which God would be greatly offended with us if we did otherwise. As ever then you would not prove yourselves hypocrites, see that you look not for the hypocrite's reward, as Christ calls it, Matt. vi. 2, which is, to be approved of men; be they good or bad men, their overvalued applause may be but the hypocrite's reward. To be content and patient in doing well, and being judged to do ill, and being good, and being judged to be bad, is the property of him that is sincere indeed; therefore, to be unthankfully requited and reviled, and spit upon, and buffeted, and shamefully used and put to death, even by those whose lives and souls he had, with greatest care and condescension, pitied, this was the pattern of love and self-denial that was set us by our Lord. And though we cannot reach his measure, and distempered Christians find much struggling before they can bring themselves to patience, under such ingratitude and unworthy usage from the world, especially from their mistaken froward brethren, yet, in some prevailing measure, it must be done. For he that cannot serve God without the hypocrite's reward, is but an hypocrite. If he will not be a Christian, obedient, charitable, diligent, faithful, for heaven and the pleasing of God alone, he is not a Christian indeed. And, alas, what a pitiful reward is it, to be thought well of, and applauded by the tongues of mortal men! How few were ever the more holy by applause! But thousands have been hurt, if not undone, by it. Thou givest all thou hast to the poor: thou spendest thyself wholly, and all that thou hast, for the service of God, and the good of others; it is well; it must be so. But, after all, thou art censured, slandered, vilified, and unthankfully and unmannerly used. And what of that? what harm dost thou fear by it? What advantage thy pride and selfishness might have taken, even by due applause and thankfulness, it is easy to perceive. But now the temptation is taken out of thy way; thou art secluded from all creature-comforts; and so art directed, and almost forced, to look up to the love of God alone; now thou hast no other reward before thee, it

is easier to look singly on the saints' reward. When God hath no competitor, to whom else canst thou turn thy thoughts? when all others abuse thee, it is easier to have recourse to him. When earth will scarce afford thee any quiet habitation, thou wilt surely look to heaven for rest.

Thus much I thought meet to interpose here for the confirmation of the sincere, on occasion of the world's unjust accusations; and so to persuade them to be satisfied in the portion of the sincere. I now return again to the self-deceiver.

And here I shall conclude all with these two requests to you, which, as one that foreseeth the approaching misery of self-deceivers, I earnestly entreat you, for the sake of your immortal souls, that you will not deny me. The first is, that you will be now but as willing to try yourselves, as I have been to help you; and as diligent and faithful when you are alone, in calling your own hearts to a close examination, as I have been to hold the light here to you. O refuse not, delay not, to withdraw yourselves sometimes from the world, and set yourselves as before the eye of God, and there bethink yourselves whether you have been what you have vowed and professed to be! And whether that God hath been dearest to your hearts, and obeyed in your lives, and desired as your happiness, who hath been confessed and honoured with your lips? Consider therefore, that God judgeth not as man; nor will he think ever the better of you, for thinking well of yourselves. And that there must go more to prove your approbation with God, than commonly goes to keep up your reputation in the world. The religion that serveth to honour you before men, and to deceive yourselves, will never serve to please the Lord and save your souls. And the day is at hand when nothing but God can give you comfort, and when self-deceivers will become, everlastingly, self-tormentors. O therefore go willingly and presently to the word, to your lives, and hearts, and consciences, and try yourselves, and try again, and that with moderate suspicion, that in so great a business you may not be deceived, and be self-deceivers.

2. My second request is, that if you do discover, or but justly suspect yourselves of hypocrisy and self-deceit, you would stick there no longer, but presently change your vain religion, your seemings and formalities, for the power of godliness and sincerity of heart.

But I suppose that some of you will say, there lies the difficulty. O that we could do it! But how should it be done?

I answer : if thou really be willing to be above hypocrisy, and a vain religion, the cure is half wrought, at least ; and I will not tire thee now with many, but help and try thee by these few, directions.

In general, be what thou hast promised and vowed to be, in thy baptism, and what thou still dost profess to be, a Christian, and it will serve thy turn : what that is, I have told you before.

More particularly. Direct. 1. Deliberately renew thy covenant with God : and with a grieved heart, bemoaning that thou hast been a covenant-breaker, give up thyself presently to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; as thy Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, thy Owner, thy Ruler, and thy Father.

2. Renounce sincerely the devil, the world, and the flesh, and be at a point with all below ; and quit all conceits and hopes of felicity, or rest, on earth : and absolutely devote and resign thyself, and all thou hast, to the will and service of thy Lord, without any secret exceptions or reserves. This is the property and plague of hypocrites, that secretly they have exceptions and reserves in giving up themselves to God. They will follow him, except it would disgrace them, or undo them, in the world ; he shall have all, provided the flesh may not be too much pinched. That is, in plain English, they take him not for God, but for a second to themselves and the world, and will give him but what the flesh can spare.

3. Fix the eye of lively faith of God upon the everlasting joys, and there take up thy whole reward, and look for no other. Quit all expectations of a reward from men. Let it seem a small thing to thee, what any mortal man shall think or speak of thee ; unless as God's honour or interest is concerned in thine. I have told you before, he is an hypocrite that will not be godly without the hypocrite's reward ; and that can sail no further than he is moved by the wind of man's applause, or some other worldly end.

4. Stick not in any externals of religion, nor in notions and barren, ineffectual opinions. So far art thou religious, as thy soul is engaged unto God, and thy life employed for him ; and so far thou dost truly worship him as thy heart is drawn up to him in love, and as thou dost fear him, admire him, trust him, and take thy pleasure in him. Think not, that it is a saving religiousness, to be of such or such an opinion, or such a party, or such a church, or to say over so many words or prayers, or

to keep a task of outward duties, or to be of a ready, voluble tongue, in preaching, prayer, or discourse, religion lieth in the heart and life.

5. Indulge not thyself in one known sin. Retain no gross or wilful sin. Plead for no infirmity, but make it the business of thy life to extirpate the relics of the body of death. Be willing of the most searching word, and of the plainest reproof, and of the help thou canst get against so dangerous an enemy.

6. Stint not thyself in any low degree of holiness ; but love, and long, and strive, after the highest. If thou bear a secret core of distaste against those that outgo thee, it is a mortal sign. Thou must be perfect in desire, or thou art not sincere.

7. Walk always as in the presence of the holy, dreadful, heart-searching God : remember that he seeth thy ends, thine affections, and all thy thoughts. Be the same, therefore, in secret as thou art in public ; sincerely search the word of God, and know what it is that he would have, and that resolve on, if all the world should be against it. Unresolvedness is hypocrisy ; and temporizing, or following the greater side, for the security of the flesh, is no better. Never think that thou canst be too holy or too obedient. But make it thy study to do God all the service that thou canst, whatever suffering or cost it put thee to. Be not ashamed openly to own the cause of Christ. In the presence of the greatest, remember that thy Master is so much the greater, that they are worms and vanity to him. Take heed of culling out the easy and cheap part of religion, and laying by the difficult and dear. Thy religion must be as the heart in thy breast, which is always working, and by which thou livest ; which cannot stop long, but thou wilt die. But the hypocrite's religion is like the hat upon his head, for ornament and shelter from the weather, and not for life : in the night when none seeth him he can lie without it ; and in the day he can put it off for the sake of a friend, and perhaps stand bare in the presence of a greater person that expecteth it. So can the hypocrite too often dispense with his religion.

8. Be hearty and serious in all thou doest. Hear, and read, and pray, as for thy life. Sincerity consisteth much in seriousness. Remember that thou art almost at another world ! While I am speaking, and thou art hearing, we are both hastening to our endless state. O how should men live on earth, that must live here for so short a time, and must live for ever in heaven or hell ! these things are true, and past all question : and there-

fore, for your souls' sake, lose not heaven by trifling. Pray not in jest, and resist not sin in jest, lest you be damned in good sadness. When you are at work for eternity, it is time to do it with all your might. O what inconceivable mercies are now offered to you! O what an excellent price is in your hands! And nothing is so likely to deprive you of the benefit, as dreaming and dallying, when you should be up and doing; as if this were not your business, but your play; and salvation and damnation were matters of sport! O do but set yourselves to the pleasing of God, and the saving of your souls with all your might, and ply it with diligence as your chiefest work, and then you are out of the danger of the hypocrite! But if still you will give the world the pre-eminence, and your flesh must be pleased, and your prosperity secured, and God must have but compliments, or the leavings, your misery is at hand, and vengeance shall undeceive those hearts that would not be undeceived by the word. And you shall remember, to the increase of your anguish, that you were told this day, that your seeming, trifling religion would prove vain. But I beseech you, as you are men, as you love your souls, dismiss us with some better hopes; and now resolve to be downright Christians. Which, as I have begged of you, I shall now beg of God.

THE
FOOL'S PROSPERITY;

A SERMON

PREACHED AT COVENT GARDEN:

PUBLISHED UPON OCCASION OF SOME OFFENCE AND
MISREPORTS.

THE
FOOL'S PROSPERITY.

PROV. i. 32, 33.

For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me, shall be quiet from fear of evil.

THE bounteous offers and vehement exhortations of Christ, here in this chapter, were accompanied with a foresight and prediction of their rejection, by many : yet doth not that prevent the offers and exhortations ; but occasion the prediction of the calamity of the refusers. . God will not go out of his way, because the ungodly will not walk with him. He will do the part of a righteous Governor, though he foresee that men will not do the part of obedient subjects. But his primary end shall be attained upon the righteous, in the successes of his grace, as his secondary end shall be upon the disobedient, in the honour of his vindictive justice. This is the sense of the words which I have now read to you. Which, 1. Describe the ungodly. 1. By their present way of sin. 2. And by their future state of misery. Their sin is described by : 1. The occasion. 2. The act. 3. The habit. Prosperity and ease is the occasion : turning away from God, and rejecting his counsel, is the act ; and folly, or simplicity, is part of the habit. Simplicity is here taken for sinful foolishness, and not, as it is often, for commendable sincerity. Whether you read it, the turning away, or the ease, of the simple, it is all one as to the scope and use that I shall now make of it, both being included as to the sense in the other words. Folly is mentioned both as the cause of their abuse of prosperity, and as the effect of prosperity so abused. Because they are fools, they turn God's mercies to their own destruction : and because they prosper, they are confirmed in their folly.

2. The words describe the godly. 1. By their obedience ;

they "hearken unto Christ." 2. By their privilege or reward; they "shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil."

We shall begin with the first, and show you, 1. That it is so, that "the prosperity of fools destroyeth them." 2. How folly and prosperity concur to their destruction; or how prosperity befooleth and destroyeth them. 3. How we should all improve this truth to our best advantage.

I. Scripture and experience concur in proving the truth of the conclusion.

1. Though God tell us in his word of a difficulty that all must conquer that will be saved, yet it is a greater, extraordinary difficulty that he tells us of, as to the rich and prosperous in the world; such a difficulty as is pathetically expressed by this interrogation, (Luke xviii. 24;) "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Such a difficulty as is expressed by his proverbial comparison; (v. 25;) "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Such a difficulty as cast the hearers into admiration, and made them ask, (v. 26,) "Who then can be saved?" Such a difficulty as is to man an impossibility, (v. 27,) and leaves only this hope that, "Things are possible to God, that are impossible to man."

2. And though it is said of men indefinitely that it is but few that shall be saved; yet is it noted of the rich and prosperous that it is few of them among those few, or few in comparison of other sorts of men, that shall be saved; (Job vii. 48;) "Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (1 Cor. i. 26;) "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." And therefore Scripture speaketh in such general language, as if salvation had been almost appropriated to the poor, and the rich had been excluded, because of the rarity of their salvation; (Luke vi. 24, 25;) "But wo unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation: wo unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger: wo unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." (Jam.

ii. 5, 6.) "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" And therefore when Christ would describe a wicked, miserable man, he doeth it in these words, (Luke xvi. 19,) "There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." And, (Luke xii. 16, 19;) "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully," &c. And when he would describe a godly, happy man, he doeth it under the name of Lazarus. (Luke xvi. 20.) Judge now by the success, as it is discovered in the Scripture, what good prosperity doth to fools.

I might turn you to David's observations in Psalm xxxvii. and lxxiii.; and mind you why it is that Christ himself went before us in a state of chosen poverty; (2 Cor. viii. 9;) and why his disciples followed him in this tract; and why he called them so much to deny and forsake the riches of the world, and tried them so oft by selling all, and following him in hopes of a heavenly reward. But the point is evident in what is said in my text, and these annexed testimonies.

2. But yet to make you more apprehensive of it, I shall adjoin the testimony of experience: and tell me whether prosperity be not the destruction of fools, when you have noted the fruits of it in these few observations.

1. Where do you find less serious care and labour for salvation than among the prosperous great ones of the world? What abundance of them are dead-hearted, senseless, disregards of everlasting things! What abundance of them are of no religion, but the custom of their country and the will of their superiors, which are their Bible, their law and gospel, and their creed! What abundance of them are addicted to that worship which Christ pronounceth vain, which is measured by the traditions of men, and consisteth merely in ceremonious shows! How few of them are acquainted with the spiritual worship of that God who, being a Spirit, can accept no worship but what is spiritual. Alas! poor souls, they drown their reason in sensuality, and are fed as for the slaughter, and think not seriously whither they are going till prosperity hath ceased to deceive them, and Satan is content to let them see that they have lost

and he hath won the game. They are of the religion described by the apostle, (1 Tim. vi. 5,) that taketh gain for godliness; but if godliness must go for gain, they will have none. To oppress their tenants, and devour widows' houses, and cloak it with a long pharisaical lip-service, or wipe their mouths with some customary complimentary prayers, and offer God to be a sharer in the prey, this is the commonest religion of the rich. But they cannot endure to be so pure as to devote themselves to God in that pure and undefiled religion which visiteth the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keepeth men unspotted from the world. (James i. 27.) What houses or company can you go into, where religion is more bitterly derided, more proudly vilified, more slanderously reproached, or more ingeniously abused and opposed, than among the rich and full-fed worldlings?

And if there be here and there a person fearing God among them, he passeth for a rarity or wonder. And a little religion goes a great way, and is applauded and admired as eminent sanctity, in persons of the higher rank. If a poor man or woman dwell, as it were, in heaven, and walk with God, and think, and speak, and live by rule, it is scarce regarded; poverty, or want of a voluble tongue, or the mixtures of unavoidable frailties, or some imprudent passages that come from the want of a more polishing culture and education, doth make their piety but matter of jesting and reproach to the Dives of the world; but if a lord, or knight, or lady, have but half their piety, humility, and obedience to God, how excellent are they in their orb! Nay, if they do but countenance religion, and befriend the servants of the Lord, and observe a course of cold performances, with the mixture of such sins for which a poor man should be almost excommunicate, what excellent religious persons are they esteemed?

2. What families are worse ordered, and have less of serious piety, than the rich? If our splendid gallants should be desired to call their families constantly to prayer; to instruct them all in the matters of salvation; to teach them the word of God with that diligence as is commanded, Deut. vi. 11, and to help them all in their preparations for death and judgment; to catechise them, and take an account of their proficiency, to curb profaneness and excess; and to say, with Joshua, (xxiv. 15,) "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;" how strange and precise a course would it seem to them! Should

they purge their families of ungodly servants, and imitate David, (Psalm ci,) that would not let the wicked dwell in his sight; should they spend the Lord's days in as serious endeavours for the spiritual benefit of their families and themselves, as poor men do that fear the Lord, what wonders of piety would they seem!

3. In their entertainments, visitations, and converse, how rare is serious, holy conference among them! How seldom do you hear them remembering their guests and companions of the presence of the Holy God, of the necessity of renewing, confirming, and assisting grace; of the riches of Christ revealed in the gospel; of the endless life of joy or misery which is at hand. How seldom do you hear them seriously assisting each other in the examining of their hearts, and making their calling and election sure, and preparing for the day of death and judgment! A word or two in private with some zealous minister or friend, is almost all the pious conference that shall be heard from some of the better sort of them. Should they discourse as seriously of the life to come, and the preparation necessary thereto, as they do about the matters of this life, they would mar the mirth and damp the pleasure of the company, and be taken for self-conceited hypocrites, or men of an unnecessary strictness and austerity, inconsistent with the jocund lepidity and sensual kind of delight wherewith they expect to be entertained. The honest, heart-warming, heavenly discourse that is usual among poor serious Christians, would seem, at the tables of most of our great ones, but an unseasonable interruption of their more natural and acceptable kind of converse.

4. What men do more carelessly cast away their precious time than these Dives do? They think they have a license to be idle and unprofitable, because they are rich; that is, to abuse or hide their talents, because they have more than other men; forgetting that, to whom much is given, of them shall much be required. Because they have no poverty or family necessities to constrain them to a laborious life, they think they may lawfully take their ease, and live as drones on other men's labours, as if they owed nothing to God or the commonwealth, but all to their own flesh. Their morning hours, which are most seasonable for meditation, and holy addresses unto God, and the works of their calling, are, perhaps, consumed in excess of sleep: the next are wasted in long attiring and curious adorning of their flesh; from thence they pass to vain discourse, to needless recreations, to eating and drinking, and so to their vain talk and

recreations again, and thence to the replenishing of their bellies, and so to sleep : and thus the words of the fool, that Christ describeth in Luke xii. 19, are turned by them into deeds, and it is the language of their sensual lives ; “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” Sleeping and sporting, and jesting, and idle talking, and eating and drinking, and dressing and undressing, with worldly cares and passions intermixed, are the very business and employment of their lives. Thus contemptuously do they waste their precious hours, while God stands by, and time makes haste, and death draws near, and their miserable souls are unprepared, and heaven or hell are hard at hand ; and this is all the time of preparation that ever shall be allowed them. O do but look on these distracted, piteous souls that have but a short, uncertain life to provide for a life that hath no end, and see how they forget or senselessly remember the matters of infinite concernment ! See how they trifle away that time that never will return ! How they sport and prate away those hours which shortly they would recal, were it possible, with the loudest cries, or recover with the dearest price ! When they know not but, in a laughter, or a merry jest, their breath may be stopped by an arrest from heaven ; or justice may surprise their miserable, unready souls with the cards in their hands, or the cup at their mouths, when they have not the least assurance of being out of hell an hour, and yet can sell this time for nothing, and basely cast it away on toys, which is all that ever they shall have to prevent everlasting misery, or to procure everlasting joy. Stand by a while, and hearken to the discourse of sensual gallants, and mark how days and weeks are spent, and then tell whether the prosperity of such fools be not made the occasion of befooling and destroying them ?

5. What men in the world do live so sensual a life as rich and prosperous worldlings live ? the difference between the sanctified and the unsanctified, the children of God and of the devil, is, that one of them liveth after the Spirit, and the other liveth after the flesh, as in Romans viii. to ver. 14, you may read at large. And how few of these Dives do think the damning sin of flesh-pleasing to be any sin in them at all ? If they do not eat till they are sick, or drink till they are drunk, their consciences scarce control them in their voluptuousness : they never well understood the meaning of such passages as these ; (Rom. xiii. 14 ;) “Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the (desires or) lusts thereof.” (Rom. viii. 13.) “If ye live after the

flesh ye shall die." (1 Cor. ix. 27.) "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection," &c. They understand not how far the flesh is their enemy; or else (as they have verbally renounced it) they would use it as an enemy.

6. In their prosperity these fools have not the wit to love or bear the means of their preservation or recovery. They have the sorest maladies, and are most impatient of the remedies. They are in the stream of temptations, and have greater need of help than others; and yet there is none that reject it with more contempt and pride. Plain-dealing preachers, which honest humble souls delight in, do seem intolerable saucy fellows to these sons of pride. If we tell them but of the sin that God hath most plainly condemned in his word, or of the judgment, which he hath there denounced, and make the most prudent and modest application of it unto them, we seem to wrong them, and stir up their pride and enmity against us, and provoke them to slanderous recriminations, or revenge. It troubles them not to commit it, or to keep it, but to hear of it; and they take us to be more faulty for admonishing them of it, than themselves for being guilty of it. Though we are by office the messengers of Christ, that will tell them of it shortly to their faces, and fear not the proudest son of Belial, yet are they too stout to be admonished by such as we, but reject our message with hatred and disdain. And, indeed, it is a wonder of mercy that the prevalency of this impatient guilt and malice hath not, ere this, turned plain and faithful preaching into some toothless formalities, or homilies, and silenced the preachers for the security of the offenders; and expelled the physicians lest they displease the sick. The Lord still prevent it. If we tell them with the greatest caution but of the necessary truths, without which a sinful soul is never like to be humbled or saved, we are taken to be turbulent, and injurious to the ease or honour of these auditors. They must hear of the necessity of regeneration and holiness, and of the weight and worth of things eternal, and yet they cannot bear to hear it. They must have heart-searching and heart-breaking truths, in a searching, awakening manner, brought home to them, if ever they will be saved by them; but they cannot endure it. The surgeon is intolerable that would search their sores; and yet there is no other way to heal them. Alas! the heart of man is so hard, that all the skill and industry of the preacher can scarce sufficiently sharpen and set home the truth that it may enter; but nothing that is sharp can be endured by these tender souls. Such language as Christ

and his prophets and apostles used, doth seem too rough for silken ears. Their honour must not be blotted with the mention of their odious sins, and deplorable misery. To be a glutton, or a drunkard, or a wanton, or a filthy fornicator, or a malicious Cain, they can endure; but to be told, "Thou art the man," though it be in secret, and with love and tenderness, they cannot bear. The minister is thought to wrong them that shall secretly and faithfully admonish them, and tell them truly what will be the end: but Christ will execute all his threatenings, and make them feel what now they hear, and yet constrain them to confess that he doth not wrong them. We wrong them now, if we tell a gentleman of his impiety, and sensuality, and pride, and of his vilifying precious time, and casting it away on cards, and idleness, and unprofitable talk; yea, though he be so far forsaken of common grace and reason, as to hate and deride the serious practice of his own profession, and the way that the God of heaven hath prescribed as flatly necessary to salvation, yet cannot he endure to hear of his enmity against the Lord, nor to be told that he beareth the image of the devil, while he is against the image and laws of Christ. Should we but privately read a text to them that condemneth them, they are as angry with us as if we made the Scripture which we read; and it were not the word of God, but ours. If we tell them that "Without holiness none shall see God," (Heb. xii. 14,) and that "Except they be regenerated, converted, and become as little children (in humility beginning the world anew) they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3. 5, 6,) that "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," (Rom. viii. 6,) or that "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," (Heb. xiii. 4,) and that "The unrighteous, the fornicators, effeminate, covetous, extortioners, drunkards, or revilers, shall not inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. vi. 9—11; Eph. v. 3—6,) they think we talk too precisely or presumptuously to them. You would think by their proud contempt of his threatenings, and their boldness and carelessness in sin, that these silk-worms did imagine that they had conquered heaven, and the Righteous God were afraid to meddle with them; or that he would reverse his laws, and pervert his judgment for fear of dishonouring or offending them. Little do they think how many Dives are now in hell. But methinks they might easily believe, that their honourable flesh is rotten, and turned to common earth; and

death will make bold to tell them, also, when their turn is come, that they have been pampering but a piece of clay ; and that it was not worth the loss of heaven, not the suffering of hell, to spend so much time, and care, and cost, to feed up a carcass for the worms. We must now submissively ask their leave, to tell them what God hath said against them. But God will not ask them leave to make it good upon the highest, the proudest, and most secure of them all ; “ For God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.” (Psalm lxxviii. 21.) “ He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness ; neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight ; he hateth all the workers of iniquity.” (Psalm v. 3, 4.) The ungodly (that delight not in the law of the Lord) are like the chaff that the wind driveth away ; they shall sit not in judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.” (Psalm i.) “ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” (Psalm ix. 17.) Cannot you endure to hear and consider of these things ? How then will you endure to feel them ? God will not flatter you. If all your greatness enable you not to repulse the assaults of death, nor to chide away the gout or stone ; and all your honour and wealth will not cure a fever, or ease you of the toothach ; how little will it do to save you from the everlasting wrath of God ! or to avert his sentence which must shortly pass on all that are impenitent ! And yet prosperity so befooleth sensual men, that they must hear of none of this ; at least not with any close and personal application. If you speak as Christ did to the Pharisees, (Matt. xxi. 45,) that they perceived that he spake of them, they take you for their enemy for telling them the truth, (Gal. iv. 16,) and meet our doctrine as Ahab did Elijah, (2 Kings xxi. 20,) “ Hast thou found me, O mine enemy !” and, (1 Kings xviii. 17,) “ Art thou he that troubleth Israel ?” or as the same Ahab of Micaiah, (1 Kings xxii. 8,) “ There is one man (Micaiah) of whom we may inquire of the Lord ; But I hate him ; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.” Or as Amaziah the priest said of Amos to King Jeroboam, “ He hath conspired against thee ; the land is not able to bear all his words.” (Amos vii. 10, 13.) “ Prophesy not again any more at Bethel ; for it is the king’s chapel, and it is the king’s court.” They behave themselves to faithful ministers as if it were a part of their inviolable honour and privilege, to be mortally sick without the trouble of a physician, and to have

nobody tell them that they are out of their way, till it be too late or that they are in misery till there be no remedy; and that none should remember them of heaven till they have lost it; nor trouble them in the way to hell, and seek to save them, lest he should but torment them before the time. And thus prosperity makes them willingly deaf and blind, and "turn away their ears from the hearing of the law," and then their prayers for mercy in their distress are rejected as abominable by the Lord. (Prov. i. 24—33; xxviii. 9.)

7. Yea, if there be any persecution raised against the church of Christ, who are the chief actors in it, but the prosperous, blinded, sensual great ones of the world? The princes make it their petition against Jeremiah to the king; "We beseech thee let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war—and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of his people but the hurt." (Jer. xxxviii. 4.) It was the presidents and princes that said of Daniel, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." (Dan. vi. 5.) Were it not lest some malicious hearer should misapply it, and think I sought to diminish the reputation of magistrates, while I show the effects of the prosperity of fools, I should give you abundance of such lamentable instances, and tell you how commonly the great ones of the world have in all ages set themselves, and taken counsel, against the Lord and against Christ. (Psal. ii.) And stumbled upon the corner-stone, and taken no warning by those that have been thus broken in pieces before them. How ready is Herod to gratify a wanton dancer with a prophet's head! In a word, as Satan is called the prince of this world, no wonder if he rule the men of the world, that have their portion in this life. (Psal. xvii. 14.) "And to command his armies, and engage them against the servants of the Most High that run not with them to the same excess of riot. (1 Pet. iv. 4.) And as James saith (as before cited) "Do not the rich oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do they not blaspheme that worthy Name by which you are called?" (Jam. ii. 6, 7.)

8. And in all this sin and misery how senseless and secure are the prosperous fools! As merry within a year, or month, or week of hell, as if no harm were near. How wonderful hard it is to convince them of their misery! The most learned, wise, or godly man, or the dearest friend they have in the world, shall

not persuade them that their case is such as to need a conversion and supernatural change. They cannot abide to take off their minds from their sensual delights and vanities, and to trouble themselves about the things of life eternal, come on it what will ; they are resolved to venture, and please their flesh, and enjoy what the world will afford them while they may, till suddenly God surpriseth them with his dreadful call, "Thou fool ! this night shall thy soul be required of thee ; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?" (Luke xii. 20.) "So is he that layeth up riches for himself, and is not rich towards God." (v. 21.)

II. I shall next show you how it is that prosperity thus destroyeth fools. Briefly, 1. By the pleasing of their sensitive appetite and fancy, and so overcoming the power of reason. "Perit omne judicium cum res transit in affectum." Violent affections hearken not to reason. The beast is made too headstrong for the rider. (Deut. xxxii. 15.) "Jerusalem waxed fat, and kicked—then he forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation."

2. "The friendship of the world is enmity to God : and if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him." (Jam. iv. 4 ; 1 John ii. 15.) And undoubtedly, the more amiable the world appears, the more strongly it doth allure the soul to love it. And to the prosperous it appeareth in the most enticing dress.

3. And hereby it taketh off the soul from God. We cannot love and serve God and Mammon. The heart is gone another way when God should have it. It is so full of love, and desire, and care, and pleasure about the creatures, that there is no room for God. How can they love him with all their hearts who have let out those hearts to vanity before ?

4. And the very noise and bustle of these worldly things diverts their mind, and hindereth them from being serious, and from that sober consideration that requireth some retirement and vacancy from distracting objects.

5. And the sense of present ease and sweetness doth make them forget the change that is near. Little do they think what is necessary to comfort a departing soul, when they are in the heat of pride and lust, or taken up with their business and delights. In the midst of bravery and plenty, feasting and sporting, and such other entertainments of the senses, it is hard to hold communion with God, and study the life to come in such

a college or library as this. Prosperity and pleasure make men drunk; and the tickled fancy sports itself in abusing the captivated mind. And these frisking lambs, and fattened beasts forget the slaughter; they think in summer there will be no winter; and their May will continue all the year. Little do they feel the piercing, griping, tearing thoughts, that at death or judgment must succeed their security and mirth. O how hard do the best men find it, in the midst of health and all prosperity, to have such serious thoughts of heaven, and of the change that death will shortly make, as they have in sickness and adversity, when death seems near, and deluding things are vanished and gone! The words of God have not that force on a sleepy soul in the hour of prosperity, as they have when distress hath opened their ears. The same truths that now seem common, lifeless, inconsiderable things, will then pierce deep, and divide between the joints and marrow, and work as if they were not the same that once were laughed at and disregarded. (Eccles. vii. 2, 3, 4.) "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting;" (do you believe this?) "For that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." I beseech you take patiently your character and name here from the word of God.

6. Moreover these fools are by prosperity so lifted up with pride, that God abhors them, and is as it were engaged to abase them. For "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud. (Prov. xv. 25.) Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." (Prov. xvi. 5.) "He scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts: He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree: He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." (Luke i. 51, 52, 53.) "In the things wherein they deal proudly, he is above them." (Exod. xviii. 11.) "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke xviii. 14.) "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (1 Pet. v. 5.)

7. But no way doth their prosperity so desperately precipitate them, and make them the scorn of heaven, and the football of divine contempt, as by engaging them in opposition to the word, and ways, and servants of the Lord. When it hath

drawn them to those sins which God condemneth, and his ministers must reprove, and hath puffed them up with pride, which makes them impatient of his reproofs, and hath increased their worldly interest and treasure, and fleshly provision, which he commandeth them to deny, this presently involveth them in a controversy with Christ before they are aware, and casteth them into the temptation of Herod when he was contradicted in his lust; and they think they are necessitated to stop the mouths that dare reprove them, and to keep under the people, and doctrine, and discipline of Christ, that are so contrary to them, and cross them, and dishonour them in their sin; and to pluck away this thorn out of their foot, and cast it from them. And thus their prosperity and carnal wisdom that is employed to secure it, engageth the earth-worms in a war with Christ; and then you may conjecture how long they can endure to kick against the pricks, and irritate the justice and jealousy of the Almighty, and presume to abuse the apple of his eye; and who will have the better in the end? The stubble is more able to resist the flames, and a fly to conquer all the world, than these daring lumps of walking clay to conquer God, or escape his vengeance. (Isa. xxvii. 4.) "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together." (Isa. xlv. 9.) "Wo to him that striveth with his Maker! let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth." (Job ix. 4.) "Who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" "They all imagine a vain thing, that set themselves and take counsel together against the Lord, and his anointed, to break his bonds, and cast away his cords from them. He that sitteth in heaven will laugh; the Lord will hold them in derision: then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.—He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him." (Psal. ii.) "They think it is but a few contemptible or hateful men that they set themselves against; forgetting Acts ix. 4, 5; Luke x. 16; 1 Thes. iv. 8, that tell them all is done to Christ: and Matt. xviii. 6; "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. xxi.

44.) "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever this stone shall fall, it will grind him to powder." I will conclude this with Amaziah's case, (2 Chron. xxv. 16.) "Art thou made of the king's counsel? Forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened," &c.

III. Before I tell you what use to make of the doctrine of this text, I shall first tell you, by way of caution, what use you should not make of it.

1. Though the prosperity of fools destroy them, do not hence accuse God that giveth them prosperity. 2. Nor do not think to excuse yourselves. 3. Nor do not think that riches are evil: for the things are good, and the mercies in themselves, and being rightly used, may further their felicity. But it is the folly and corruption of their hearts that thus abuse them, and make good an occasion of evil. I may allude to Paul's words concerning the law, (Rom. vii. 7, 13,) Are they sin? or is that which is good made death to them? "God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death by that which is good." Because they are carnally sold under sin.

4. Nor must you cast away your riches, or refuse them when offered by God. But take them as a faithful steward doth his master's stock, not desiring to be overburdened or endangered with the charge, but bearing what is imposed on you, resolving to improve it all for God. Not loving nor desiring wealth, authority, or honour, nor yet so lazy, timorous, or distrustful as not to accept the burden and charge, when God may be served by it. To cast away or hide your talents, is the part of an unprofitable servant.

5. Take heed lest, under pretence of contemning riches and prosperity, you be tempted to condemn your governors, or to speak evil of dignities, or diminish the honour of those that are set over us, whose honour is necessary to the ends of government, and therefore to the people's good. Though James reproves the church for partiality in over-honouring a man for a gold ring, or gay apparel, yet doth he not go about to abate the honour of authority. Magistracy and riches must be here distinguished.

6. Take heed lest, while you declaim of the misery of the rich, you think to be saved merely for being poor; for, poor or rich, if you be ungodly, you must turn, or die. God doth

not condemn men for their riches, but their sin ; nor save any for their poverty, but their faith and piety, through Christ.

But the uses you should make of the text are these:—

1. Grudge not at the prosperity of ungodly men, but compassionate them in their danger and misery.

2. Be not afraid of the prosperity of the wicked. (Psalm xlix. 16—19.) It is they that should be afraid that have so low to fall.

3. Take heed that you desire not riches or prosperity, unless you desire that the way to heaven should be made harder to you, that is so hard already. Be contented with food and raiment. Desire but your daily bread, unless as it is needful for your Master's service, and the relief of others.

4. Honour those ever, with a double honour, that are great and godly, that are rich and religious ; not because they are rich, but because they are so strong and excellent in grace as to overcome such great temptations ; and to be heavenly in the midst of earthly plenty, and to be faithful stewards of so much. Religious, faithful princes, and magistrates, cannot easily be valued and honoured too much. What wonders are they in the most part of the earth ! What a blessing to the people that are ruled by them ! Were they not strong in faith, they could not stand fast in such a stormy place. Where is there in the world a more lively resemblance of God than a holy prince or governor, that liveth no more to the flesh than the poorest, for all his abundance of fleshly accommodations, and that devoteth and improveth all his power, and honour, and interest, to the promoting of holiness, love, and concord ?

5. Let great men have a double interest in your prayers. They have a double need of grace and help ; and we have a double need that they should be gracious. Oh ! think how hard it is to save their faith, their innocency, and their souls, and to save the gospel and the public peace in the midst of so many and great temptations ; and, therefore, pray hard where prayer is so needful.

And, O that I were now able to speak such enlightening and awakening words to you, as might show you at once your worldly prosperity and the heavenly glory in their proper value ! and that God would now open your eyes and hearts accordingly, to esteem and seek them. Gentlemen, will you give this once an impartial hearing, to one that envieth not your wealth, but foreseeth the end of it ; and how it will forsake you, and in

how deplorable a case you will then be found, if you have not laid up a treasure in heaven, and secured the everlasting riches. I grudge you not your prosperity, for God doth not grudge it you: yea, the devil himself can afford it you for a time, while you serve him by it, and are captivated to his will in these golden fetters. And say not that it is I that call such fools: you see here it is God, that knoweth what he saith, and feareth not to speak it. But let me, with due submission, propound to your sober consideration these questions which your consciences are concerned to resolve.

Quest. 1. Can any thing prove him truly wise that directly contradicteth the wisdom of the Lord, and valueth most the things that are most vilified by the doctrine and example of Christ and his apostles, and vilifieth that which Christ extollet?h?

Quest. 2. Can any thing prove that man to be wise that is not wise enough to be saved? Surely it altereth the case but little, whether Satan be served in English, or in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, in Spanish, Italian, or French: or whether you go towards everlasting wo in leather or in silk; and a miserable unsanctified soul do dwell in a comely or deformed body; and in a stately building or a smoky cottage; and be titled a lord, a knight, or a ploughman; and whether he feed on the most delightful or the coarsest food. Alas! all this will soon be nothing. "The belly for meats, and meats for the belly; but God will destroy both it and them." (1 Cor. vi. 13.) It is the endless life that puts the estimate upon all things here.

Quest. 3. Is he wise that preferreth a feather to a kingdom; an hour to eternity; earth to heaven? If you say you do not so, let your thoughts, your desires, your delights, your cares, and your labour and diligence, be the witnesses, and conscience and God shall finally judge. A man of reason should never make such a matter of nothing, as if there were so great a difference between riches and poverty, honour and dishonour, and a man's life or happiness consisted in his abundance. As it is usually the badge of empty, childish, brain-sick women, to value a curiosity of attire, and to have mind and time for so many toys, and to make ostentation of their pride and folly, by their curled, spotted, gaudy vanity, as if they were afraid lest they should be unacquainted with it, and should think them wise; so is it but a more plausible deliration in those that are more taken up with names, and titles, and commands, with houses and

lands, and pompous attendance ; and yet more brutish, where lust, and sports, and meats, and drinks, are taken for felicity, while God and heaven stand by neglected, and men forget that they are called Christians, and that they are men.

Quest. 4. Is it wisdom to esteem men by their prosperity and pomp, and to admire a gilded post or an ignorant, adorned wanton ; and yet to overlook the divine and heavenly nature of the sanctified, and the beauty of holiness, and the image of God upon an humble, gracious soul, when that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God ? (Luke xvi. 15.)

Quest. 5. Is it wisdom to be feasting, and playing, and dancing, while the soul is under the wrath of God, and in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of its iniquity ? and by the noise, and business, and pleasures of the world, to be diverted and hindered from the speedy settling and securing your everlasting state ? Should not a man of reason, without delay, the first thing he doeth, make sure of his title to eternal happiness, when he is not sure of another hour ; and if he miscarry in this, he is undone for ever ? Should that time be laughed and played away that hasteth so fast, and is all so short for so great a work as the securing our salvation ? Should men and women be courting, and complimenting, and fooling away their precious time, when the work is undone for which they were born into the world, and for which they have their lives, and all their mercies ?

Quest. 6. Should all this be done by those that sin against their knowledge, and confess all this while that the world is vanity, and know it will leave them, and that all this is true ?

Oh ! Sirs, it must needs be the grief of a foreseeing man to think, when you forget it, what a change is coming, and what a sad preparation you are making, and how little a while the music, the feast, the cards and dice, the filthy lusts and wanton dalliance, will continue ! and what a lump of self-tormenting desperation will seize upon those careless scornful hearts that now will not be awakened and warmed, nor understand any further than they see or feel ! In compassion to those that are passing hence to another world, I beseech you, sometime withdraw yourselves from sensual diversions, and soberly bethink you whether this be the place and company that you must be with for ever ; how long this merry life will last ; and whether this be the work that the God of heaven did send you

about into the world ; and whether it would be more comfortable to your review when time is gone, to think of your days of sensual delight, or of a holy, and humble, and heavenly conversation ; and to hear with Dives, (Luke xvi. 25,) “ Son, remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.” O then you would wish that you had never heard those airy titles, and never possessed those sumptuous houses, nor never tasted those delicious feasts, nor never worn that gay attire, nor never known that deceiving company, nor been polluted and brutified with those beastly lusts ! Then conscience will force the now befooled Dives to cry out, ‘ O that I had been the most despised man on earth while honour did befool me ! O that I had lain in medicinal poverty and rags when I took this mortal surfeit of prosperity ! O that I had lain in tears and sorrow, when I was infatuated by fleshly mirth and pleasure, and that I had been among the saints that foresaw and provided for this day, when I drowned the voice of Christ and conscience with the laughter of a fool and the noise of worldly business and delights ! O then, how revengefully will you befool yourselves, that you had time and knew no better how to use it ! and how sensibly will you justify the wisdom of believers who bent their care for things eternal ! I am ashamed of my heart that melts not in compassion in the foresight of your wo ; and that I beg not of you with tears and importunity to prevent it, and to have mercy on yourselves. Paul had a better heart than I, that ceased not to warn every one, day and night, with tears, (Acts xx. 31,) and speaketh thus of such as you ; (Phil. iii. 18, 19;) “ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” When the conversation of believers is in heaven, from whence they look for the Lord their Saviour.

I suppose you are afraid of the austerities of religion ; and the devil would persuade you that it is but a self-tormenting or hypocritical life that we commend to you under the name of godliness, especially when you see the sadness of some honest souls that are abused by Satan through the advantages of melancholy : but I must profess it is sorrow that I call you from, and would prevent : it is no unnecessary grief that I would persuade you to, but to a life of heavenly peace and joy. If Satan

have abused any servants of Christ, by darkening, and troubling, and discomforting their minds, which is his ordinary endeavour when he can no longer keep men quiet, and careless, and presumptuous in their misery. This is clean contrary to the nature of religion and the commands of Christ, that chargeth them always to rejoice. Do you think that I cannot have more solid joy with my daily bread, in the apprehensions of the love of God, and the belief of his promises of eternal life, than foolish mirth comes to, that is likened to the crackling of thorns in the fire? (Eccles. vii. 6.) You are for mirth, and we are for mirth; but it is a hearty, solid, spiritual, grounded, lasting mirth that we invite you to; and it is a beastly, sensual pleasure that ungodly men desire. For my part, it is almost half my work to promote the joys of true believers, and to dissuade them from such causeless despondencies and troubles as would rob them of their comforts, and God of their love, and thanks, and praise. Had you but tasted once the difference between this inward feast and yours, I should need no more words with you to persuade you that godliness is a life of joy. Dare any of you say, and stand to it, that there is not greater matter for joy in the love of Christ than in the love of a harlot? in the assurance of salvation than in lands and lordships? in the foresight of heaven than in the company of light-headed, voluptuous people, that have not wit enough to be serious, nor faith enough to foresee that which will so sadly and speedily spoil the sport? To be foolishly merry in the midst of misery, doth but make you the objects of greater compassion. Be as merry as you can, so it be grounded, and durable, and caused by that which God, and faith, and solid reason will approve, and doth not tend to greater sorrows. Bethink you well whether Christ and his apostles lived not a more comfortable life than you: and imitate them in their way of mirth and spare not.

But if you are unsanctified, sensual, worldly men, lay by your mirth till you are fitter for it, and take your portion from the apostle James, (v. 1—3, 5,) “Go to now ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.”

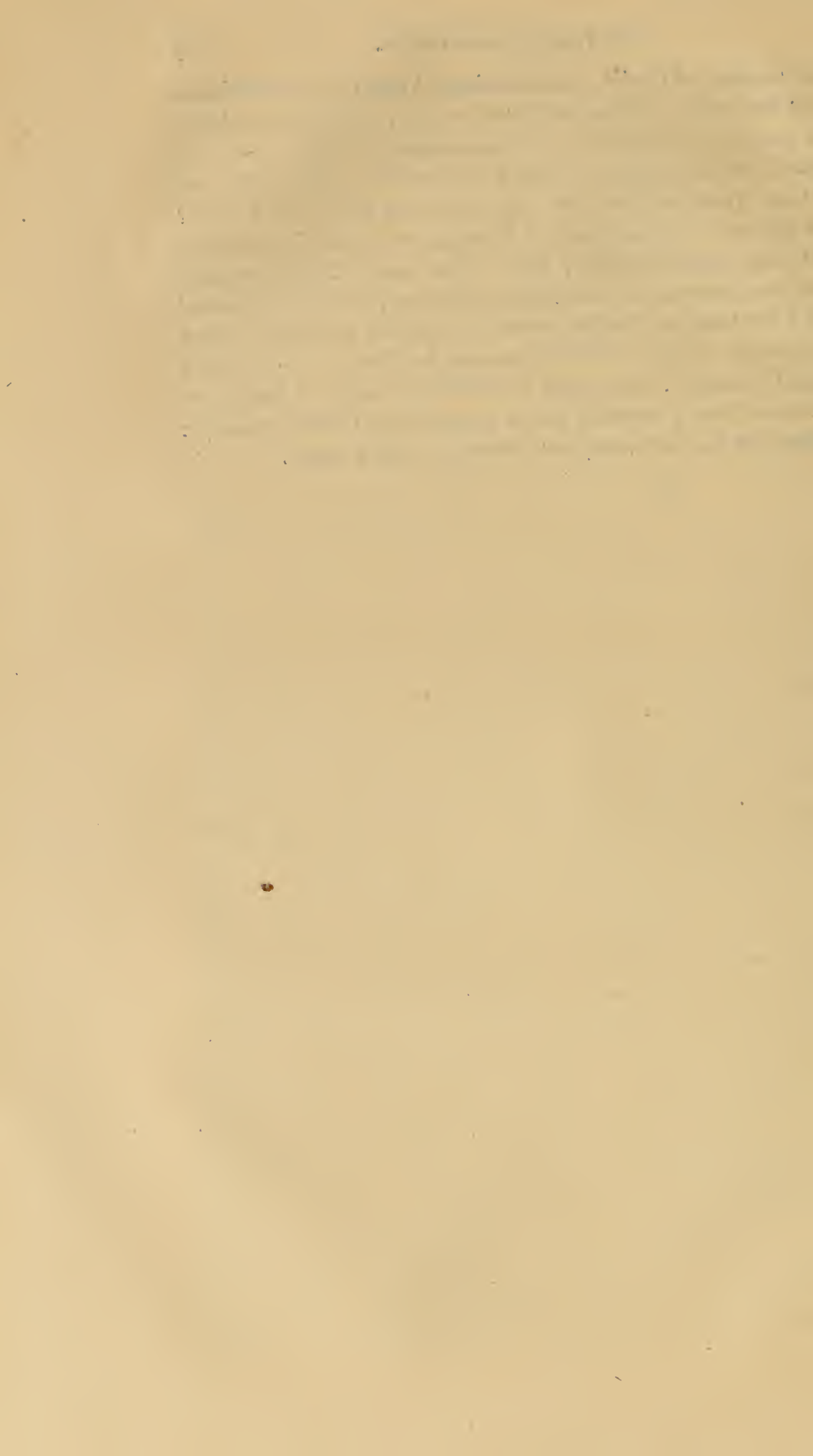
What pity is it to see men destroy themselves with the mercies of the Lord ! What pity is it to see them so eager for prosperity, and so regardless of the proper use and benefit of it ? O be not like the bee that is drowned in her own honey ! And do not so greedily desire a greater burden than you can bear ; and to have more to answer for, when you have been so unfaithful in a little. And if you believe Christ, who tells you how hardly rich men come to heaven, and how few of them are saved, long not for your danger, and grudge not if you have not these exceeding difficulties to overcome. You would be afraid to dwell in that air where few men escape infection ; or to feed on that diet that most are killed by. It is evident by the effects that prosperity befooleth and undoeth the most ; we find you on your sick beds in a more tractable frame.

1. Then a man may speak to you about the case of your immortal souls, with less contempt than now we meet with. You look not then for laced speeches, but will more patiently hear our plain discourses of eternal life. 2. Then you will seem serious yourselves, and speak almost like those that you called precisians and puritans, for remembering you of these things in your prosperity. 3. Then you have some better relish of truth and duty ; and judge better of the matter and manner of exhortation and prayer than you do now. 4. Then you have more charity and moderation to others ; and are not enraged to the destroying of those that are not of your opinions in all your formalities. 5. You would then shake the head at him that should offer you cards, or dice, or fleshly vanities ; and you would tell others that it is wiser to be delighted in the law of God, and meditate in it day and night. 6. Then you will speak as contemptuously of the honour, and pleasures, and profits of the world, and of pleasing men before the Lord, as we do now. 7. And then you will confess the preciousness of time ; the folly of misspending it ; and that one thing is necessary, for which we can never (regularly) do too much. And why are you not now of the mind that you will be at death or judgment, but that your folly doth turn your prosperity to your bane ? Once more I beseech you, for the Lord's sake, retire from the deceiving world to God ; and if you care where you live to all eternity, choose your abode ; and now set your heart upon it, and seek it as your happiness. If all these warnings are refused, conscience shall tell you when you would not hear it, that you were warned.

Had time allowed it, I should next have delivered my message to the humble, upright souls. All you "that hearken to the Lord, shall dwell in safety, and be quiet from the fear of evil." (Isaiah iii. 10.) "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him.—Wo to the wicked; it shall be ill with him." (Eccles. viii. 12.) "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God." (Psalm lxxiii. 1.) "Truly God is good to Israel; even to such as are of a clean heart." (Psalm xxxvii. 5, 28, 34, 37.) "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust in him and he shall bring it to pass. For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints: they are preserved for ever——wait on the Lord and keep his way——and when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."

If you say, 'How are they safe that are so tossed by sufferings?' I answer, 1. Is he not safe that hath the promise of God for his security, and is related to him as his child, and hath Christ for his head and Saviour? 2. Is he not safe that is delivered from the wrath of God and the flames of hell, and dare look before him to eternity with hope and comfort? And shall live with Christ in joy for ever? 3. Is he not safe that hath no enemy, but what is in his Father's power. 4. And that hath no hurt but what shall certainly procure his good? 5. Nor any but what we may rejoice in; and is sure shall be the matter of his thanks when it is past? That shall lose nothing but what he hath already forsaken, and esteemeth but as dross and dung? How often have we told God in our prayers, that we had rather have the light of his countenance in adversity, than be strange to him in prosperity? And that he would not refuse that state of suffering, that should be blest to the destruction of our sins, and the furthering our communion with God, and our assurance of salvation, and in which we might most serve and honour him in the world. Did we live by sense, we should misjudge of our estate: but seeing we live by faith, and in the way can see the end, we can say that we are safe in the thickest of our enemies, and will not fear what man can do, while the Almighty is our rock and fortress: well may we be quiet from that fear of evil, when we are saved from the great everlasting evil! No evil shall follow us into heaven: no malice shall there defame us; nor virulent tongue blaspheme our holy profession or our Lord; for the mists of hellish blasphemies shall never ascend to

blot the glory of Christ or of his saints. Who then shall take us out of his hands ? Who shall condemn us ? It is he that justifieth us ; not only against the calumnies of malice, but also against the accusations of Satan for our sin. How safe and quiet are those millions of souls, that are now with Christ ? How little are they annoyed, or their joy or melody interrupted, by all the rage of earth or hell ! The glory of the sun may sooner be darkened or blemished by obloquy, than their celestial glory ; for they are glorified with the glory of their Lord ; and rejoice with his joy, and live because he liveth. Be of good cheer, Christians ! the haven is within the sight of faith ; we are almost there ; adversity is our speediest and surest passage : and then let sin, and rage, and malice, do their worst.



A

SERMON OF REPENTANCE,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT

AT WESTMINSTER,

AT THEIR LATE SOLEMN FAST FOR THE SETTLING
OF THESE NATIONS,

APRIL 30, 1660.

Tuesday, May 1, 1660.

ORDERED,

That the Thanks of this House be given to Mr. BAXTER, for his great pains in carrying on the work of preaching and prayer, before the House, at Saint Margaret's, Westminster, yesterday, being set apart by this House for a day of fasting and humiliation; and that he be desired to print his sermon, and is to have the same privilege in printing the same that others have had in the like kind, and that Mr. Swinfin do give him notice thereof.

W. JESSOP,

Clerk of the Commons' House of Parliament.

HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

As your order for my preaching persuadeth me you meant attentively to hear, so your order for my publishing this sermon persuadeth me that you will vouchsafe considerably to read it; (for you would not command me to publish only for others that which was prepared for and suited to yourselves;) which second favour if I may obtain, especially of those that need most to hear the doctrine of repentance, I shall hope that the authority of the heavenly Majesty, the great concernment of the subject, and the evidence of reason, and piercing beams of sacred verity, may yet make a deeper impression on your souls, and promote that necessary work of holiness, the fruits whereof would be effectual remedies to the diseased nations, and would conduce to your own everlasting joy. Shall I think it were presumption for me to hope for so high a reward for so short a labour? Or shall I think it were uncharitableness not to hope for it? That here is nothing but plain English, without any of those ornaments that are by many thought necessary to make such discourses grateful to ingenious, curious auditors, proceeded not only from my present want of advantages for study, (having and using no book but a Bible and a Concordance,) but also from the humbling and serious nature of the work of the day and from my own inclination, less affecting such ornaments in sacred discourses than formerly I have done. It is a very great honour that God and you have put upon me, to conclude so solemn a day of prayer, which was answered the next morning by your speedy, and cheerful, and unanimous acknowledgment of His Majesty's authority. May I have but the second part, to promote your salvation, and the happiness of this land, by your considering and obeying these necessary truths, what greater honour could I expect on earth? Or how could you more oblige me to remain

A daily petitioner to heaven for these mercies,

on your own and the nation's behalf,

RICHARD BAXTER.

SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

EZEK. xxxvi. 31.

Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.

THE words are a part of God's prognostics of the Jews' restoration, whose dejection he had before described. Their disease began within, and there God promiseth to work the cure. Their captivity was but the fruit of their voluntary captivity to sin, and their grief of heart was but the fruit of their hardness of heart, and their sharpest suffering of their foul pollutions, and therefore God promiseth a methodical cure, even to take away their old and stony heart, and cleanse them from their filthiness, and so to ease them by the removing of the cause. How far, and when, this promise was to be made good to the Jews, as nationally considered, is a matter that requires a longer disposition than my limited hour will allow, and the decision of that case is needless, as to my present end and work. That this is part of the-gospel covenant, and applicable to us believers now, the Holy Ghost, in the epistle to the Hebrews, hath assured us.

The text is the description of the repentance of the people, in which the beginning of their recovery doth consist, and by which the rest must be attained. The evil which they repent of is, in general, all their iniquities, but especially their idolatry, called their abominations. Their repentance is foretold, as it is in the understanding and thoughts, and as in the will and affections. In the former, it is called "remembering their own evil ways." In the latter, it is called "loathing themselves in their own sight, for their iniquities and abominations." Montanus translates it *reprehabetis in vos*; but in c. 20, v. 43, *fastidietis vos*. The same sense is intended by the other versions. When the Septuagint translates it by displeasure, and

the Chaldee by groaning, and the Syriac by the wrinkling of the face, and the Sept., in c. xx. 43, by smiting on the face; the Arabic here perverts the sense by turning all to negatives, ye shall not, &c., yet in c. xx. 43, he turns it by the tearing of the face. I have purposely chosen a text that needs no long explication, that in obedience to the foreseen straits of time I may be excused from that part, and be more on the more necessary. This observation contains the meaning of the text, which, by God's assistance, I shall now insist on, viz.:

The remembering of their own iniquities, and loathing themselves for them, is the sign of a repenting people, and the prognostic of their restoration, so far as deliverance may be here expected.

For the opening of which, observe these things following.

2. It is not all kind of remembering that will prove you penitent. The impenitent remember their sin that they may commit it; they remember it with love, desire, and delight; the heart of the worldling goeth after his airy or earthen idol, The heart of the ambitious feedeth on his vain glory, and the people's breath, and the filthy fornicator is delighted in the thoughts of the object and exercise of his lust. But it is a remembering, 1. From a deep conviction of the evil and odiousness of sin. 2. And with abhorrence and self-loathing. 5. That leadeth to a resolved and vigilant forsaking, that is the proof of true repentance, and the prognostic of a people's restoration.

3. And it is not all self-loathing that will signify true repenting, for there is a self-loathing of the desperate and the damned soul that abhorreth itself, and teareth and tormenteth itself, and cannot be restrained from self-revenge, when it finds that it hath wilfully, foolishly, and obstinately been its own destroyer. But the self-loathing of the truly penitent hath these following properties:

1. It proceedeth from the predominant love of God, whom we have abused and offended. The more we love him, the more we loathe what is contrary to him.

2. It is much excited by the observation and sense of his exceeding mercies, and is conjunct with gratitude.

3. It continueth and increaseth under the greatest assurance of forgiveness, and sense of love, and dieth not when we think we are out of danger.

4. It containeth a loathing of sin as sin, and a love of ho-

liness as such, and not only a love of ease and peace, and a loathing of sin, as the cause of suffering.

5. It resolveth the soul against returning to its former course, and resolveth it for an entire devotedness to God for the time to come.

6. It deeply engageth the penitent in a conflict against the flesh, and maketh him victorious, and setteth him to work in a life of holiness, as his trade and principal business in the world.

7. It bringeth him to a delight in God and holiness, and a delight in himself, so far as he findeth God, and heaven, and holiness within him. He can, with some comfort and content, own himself and his conversation so far as God (victorious against his carnal self) appeareth in him. For as he loveth Christ in the rest of his members, so must he in himself. And this is it that self-loathing doth prepare for.

This must be the self-loathing that must afford you comfort, as a penitent people in the way to restoration.

Where you see it is implied, that materially it containeth these common acts. 1. Accusing and condemning thoughts against ourselves. It is a judging of ourselves, and makes us call ourselves, with Paul, foolish, disobedient, deceived; yea, mad; (as Acts xxvi. 11;) and with David to say, I have done foolishly. (2 Sam. xxiv. 10.) 2. It containeth a deep distaste and displeasure with ourselves, and a heart-rising against ourselves. 3. As also an holy indignation against ourselves, as apprehending that we have played the enemies to ourselves and God. 4. And it possesseth us with grief and trouble at our miscarriages. So that a soul in this condition is sick of itself, and vexed with its self-procured wo.

2. Note also, that when self-loathing proceedeth from mere conviction, and is without the love of God and holiness, it is but the tormentor of the soul, and runs it deeper into sin, provoking men here to destroy their lives; and in hell it is the never-dying worm.

3. Note also, that it is themselves that they are said to loathe, because it is ourselves that conscience hath to do with, as witness, and as judge; it is ourselves that are naturally nearest to ourselves, and our own affairs that we are most concerned in. It is ourselves that must have the joy or torment, and therefore it is our own actions and estate that we have first to mind. Though yet, as magistrates, ministers, and neighbours, we must

next mind others, and must loathe iniquity wherever we meet it, and a vile person must be condemned in our eyes, while we honour them that fear the Lord. (Psalm xv. 4.)

And as by nature, so in the commandment, God hath given to every man the first and principal care and charge of himself, and his own salvation, and consequently of his own ways, so that we may with less suspicion loathe ourselves than others, and are more obliged to do it.

4. Note also, that it is not for our troubles, or our disgrace, or our bodily deformities, or infirmities, or for our poverty and want, that penitents are said to loathe themselves, but for their iniquities and abominations. For, 1. This loathing is a kind of justice done upon ourselves, and therefore is exercised, not for mere infelicities, but for crimes. Conscience keepeth in its own court, and meddleth but with moral evils, which we are conscious of. 2. And also it is sin that is loathed by God, and makes the creature loathsome in his eyes; and repentance conformeth the soul to God, and therefore causeth us to loathe as he doth, and on his grounds. And, 3. There is no evil but sin, and that which sin procureth, and therefore it is for sin that the penitent loathes himself.

5. Note also, that it is here implied, that, till repentance, there was none of this remembering of sin, and loathing of themselves. They begin with our conversion, and, as before described, are proper to the truly penitent. For, to consider them distinctly, 1. The deluded soul that is bewitched by its own concupiscence, is so taken up with remembering of his fleshly pleasures, and his alluring objects, and his honours, and his earthly businesses and store, that he hath no mind or room for the remembering of his foolish, odious sin, and the wrong that he is doing to God, and to himself. Death is oblivious, and sleep hath but a distracted ineffectual memory, that stirreth not the busy dreamer from his pillow, nor despatcheth any of the work he dreams of. And the unconverted are asleep, and dead in sin. The crowd of cares and worldly businesses, and the tumultuous noise of foolish sports, and other sensual passions and delights, do take up the minds of the unconverted, and turn them from the observation of the things of greatest everlasting consequence. They have a memory for sin and the flesh, to which they are alive, but not for things spiritual and eternal, to which they are dead. They remember not God himself as God, with any effectual remembrance. God is not in all their thoughts.

(Psal. x. 4.) They live as without him in the world. (Eph. ii. 12.) And if they remember not God, they cannot remember sin as sin, whose malignity lieth in its opposition to the will and holiness of God. They forget themselves, and therefore must needs forget their sinfulness. Alas ! they remember not effectually and savingly, what they are, and why they were made, and what they are daily nourished and preserved for, and what business they have to do here in the world. They forget that they have souls to save or lose, that must live in endless joy or torment. You may see by their careless and ungodly lives that they forget it. You may hear by their carnal frothy speech that they forget it. And he that remembereth not himself, remembereth not his own concernments. They forget the end to which they tend. The life which they must live for ever. The matters everlasting, whose greatness and duration, one would think, should so command the mind of man, and take up all his thoughts and cares in despite of all the little trifling matters that would avert them, that we should think almost of nothing else ; yet these, even these, that nothing but deadness or madness should make a reasonable creature to forget, are daily forgotten by the unconverted soul, or ineffectually remembered. Many a time have I admired that men of reason are here to-day, and in endless joy or misery to-morrow, should be able to forget such inexpressible concernments ! Methinks they should easier forget to rise, or dress themselves, or to eat, or drink, or any thing, than to forget an endless life, which is so undoubtedly certain, and so near. A man that hath a cause to be heard to-morrow, in which his life or honour is concerned, cannot forget it ; a wretch that is condemned to die to-morrow, cannot forget it. And yet poor sinners, that are continually uncertain to live an hour, and certain speedily to see the majesty of the Lord, to their unconceivable joy or terror, as sure as now they live on earth, can forget these things for which they have their memory ; and which one would think should drown the matters of this world, as the report of a cannon doth a whisper, or as the sun obscureth the poorest glow-worm. O wonderful stupidity of an unrenewed soul ! O wonderful folly and distractedness of the ungodly ! That ever men can forget, I say again, that they can forget, eternal joy, eternal wo, and the Eternal God, and the place of their eternal, unchangeable abode, when they stand even at the door, and are passing in, and there is but the thin

veil of flesh between them and that amazing sight, that eternal gulf; and they are daily dying, and even stepping in. O could you keep your honours here for ever; could you ever wear that gay attire, and gratify your flesh with meats, and drinks, and sports, and lusts; could you ever keep your rule and dignity, or your earthly life in any state, you had some little poor excuse for not remembering the eternal things, (as a man hath, that preferreth his candle before the sun,) but when death is near and inexorable, and you are sure to die as you are sure to live; when every man of you that sitteth in these seats to day can say, 'I must shortly be in another world, where all the pomp and pleasure of this world will be forgotten, or remembered but as my sin and folly,' one would think it were impossible for any of you to be ungodly, and to remember the trifles and nothings of the world, while you forget that everlasting all, whose reality, necessity, magnitude, excellency, concernment, and duration are such, as should take up all the powers of your souls, and continually command the service and attendance of your thoughts against all seekers, and contemptible competitors whatsoever. But alas, though you have the greatest helps, (in subservience to these commanding objects,) yet will you not remember the matters which alone deserve remembrance; sometimes the preachers of the gospel do call on you to remember; to remember your God, your souls, your Saviour, your ends, and everlasting state, and to remember your misdoings, that you may loathe yourselves, and in returning may find life; but some either scorn them, or quarrel with them, or sleep under their most serious and importunate solicitations, or carelessly and stupidly give them the hearing, as if they spoke but words of course, or treated about uncertain things, and spoke not to them from the God of heaven, and about the things that every man of you shall very shortly see or feel. Sometimes you are called on by the voice of conscience within, to remember the unreasonableness and evil of your ways; but conscience is silenced, because it will not be conformable to your lusts. But little do you think what a part your too late awakened conscience hath yet to play, if you give it not a more sober hearing in time. Sometimes the voice of common calamities, and national or local judgments, call on you to remember the evil of your ways; but that which is spoken to all, or many, doth seem to most of them as spoken unto none. Sometimes the voice of particular judgments, seizing upon your families, persons or estates, doth

call on you to remember the evil of your ways ; and one would think the rod should make you hear. And yet you most disregardfully go on, or are only frightened into a few good purposes and promises, that die when health and prosperity revive. Sometimes God joineth all these together, and pleadeth both by word and rod, and addeth also the inward pleadings of his Spirit ; he sets your sins in order before you, (Psalm l. 21,) and expositulateth with you the cause of his abused love, despised sovereignty, and provoked justice ; and asketh the poor sinner, ‘ Hast thou done well to waste thy life in vanity, to serve thy flesh, to forget thy God, thy soul, thy happiness ; and to thrust his services into corners, and give him but the odious leavings of the flesh ? ’ But these pleas of God cannot be heard. O horrible impiety ! By his own creatures ; by reasonable creatures (that would scorn to be called fools or madmen) the God of heaven cannot be heard ! The brutish, passionate, furious sinners will not remember. They will not remember what they have done, and with whom it is that they have to do, and what God thinks and saith of men in their condition ; and whither it is that the flesh will lead them ; and what will be the fruit and end of all their lusts and vanities ; and how they will look back on all at last ; and whether an holy or a sensual life will be sweetest to a dying man ; and what judgment it is that they will all be of, in the controversy between the flesh and Spirit, at the latter end. Though they have life, and time, and reason for their uses, we cannot entreat them to consider of these things in time. If our lives lay on it, as their salvation, which is more, lieth on it, we cannot entreat them. If we should kneel to them, and with tears beseech them, but once a day, or once a week, to bestow one hour in serious consideration of their latter end, and the everlasting state of saints and sinners, and of the equity of the holy ways of God, and the iniquity of their own, we cannot prevail with them. Till the God of heaven doth overrule them we cannot prevail. The witness that we are forced to bear is sad ; it is sad to us ; but it will be sadder to these rebels that shall one day know that God will not be outfaced ; and that they may sooner shake the stable earth, and darken the sun by their reproaches, than outbrave the Judge of all the world, or by all their cavils, wranglings, or scorns, escape the hands of his revenging justice.

But if ever the Lord will save these souls, he will bring their misdoings to their remembrance. He will make them think of

that which they were so loath to think on. You cannot now abide these troubling and severe meditations; the thoughts of God, and heaven, and hell; the thoughts of your sins, and of your duties, are melancholy, unwelcome thoughts to you; but O that you could foreknow the thoughts that you shall have of all these things! even the proudest, scornful, hardened sinner, that heareth me this day, shall shortly have such a remembrance, as will make him wonder at his present blockishness. O when the irresistible power of heaven shall open all your sins before you, and command you to remember them, and to remember the time, and place, and persons, and all the circumstances of them, what a change will it make upon the most stout or stubborn of the sons of men; what a difference will there then be between that trembling, self-tormenting soul, and the same that now in his gallantry can make light of all these things, and call the messenger of Christ who warneth him, a puritan, or a doating fool! Your memories now are somewhat subject to your wills; and if you will not think of your own, your chief, your everlasting concerns, you may choose. If you will choose rather to employ your noble souls on beastly lusts, and waste your thoughts on things of nought, you may take your course, and chase a feather with a childish world, till, overtaking it, you see you have lost your labour. But when justice takes the work in hand, your thoughts shall be no more subject to your wills; you shall then remember that which you are full loath to remember, and would give a world that you could forget. O then one cup of the waters of oblivion would be of inestimable value to the damned! O what would they not give that they could but forget the time they lost, the mercy they abused, the grace which they refused, the holy servants of Christ whom they despised, the wilful sins which they committed, and the many duties which they wilfully omitted! I have often thought of their case when I have dealt with melancholy or despairing persons. If I advised them to cast away such thoughts, and turn their minds to other things, they tell me they cannot; it is not in their power; and I have long found that I may almost as well persuade a broken head to give over aching. But when the holy God shall purposely pour out the vials of his wrath on the consciences of the ungodly, and open the books, and show them all that ever they have done, with all the aggravations, how then shall these worms be able to resist?

And now I beseech you all, consider, is it not better to re-

member your sins on earth, than in hell ? Before your physician, than before your Judge ? For your cure, than for your torment ? Give me leave, then, before I go any further, to address myself to you as the messenger of the Lord, with this importunate request, both as you stand here in your private, and in your public capacities. In the name of the God of heaven, I charge you, remember the lives that you have led ! remember what you have been doing in the world ! remember how you have spent your time ! and whether, indeed, it is God that you have been serving, and heaven that you have been seeking, and holiness and righteousness that you have been practising in the world till now ! Are your sins so small, so venial, so few, that you can find no employment on them for your memories ? or is the offending of the Eternal God so slight and safe a thing as not to need your consideration ? God forbid you should have such atheistical conceits ! Surely God made not his laws for nought ; nor doth he make such a stir by his word, and messengers, and providences, against an harmless thing ; nor doth he threaten hell to men for small, indifferent matters ; nor did Christ need to have died, and done all that he hath done, to cure a small and safe disease. Surely that which the God of heaven is pleased to threaten with everlasting punishment, the greatest of you all should vouchsafe to think on, and with greatest fear and soberness to remember.

It is a pitiful thing, that with men, with gentlemen, with professed Christians, God's matters, and their own matters, their greatest matters, should seem unworthy to be thought on ; when they have thoughts for their honours, and their lands, and friends ; and thoughts for their children, their servants, and provision ; and thoughts for their horses, and their dogs, and sports. Is God and heaven less worthy than these ? are death and judgment matters of less moment ? Gentlemen, you would take it ill to have your wisdom undervalued, and your reason questioned ; for your honour's sake do not make it contemptible yourselves in the eyes of all that are truly wise. It is the nobleness of objects that most ennobles your faculties, and the baseness of objects doth debase them. If brutish objects be your employment and delight, do I need to tell you what you make yourselves ? If you would be noble indeed, let God and everlasting glory be the object of your faculties ; if you would be great, then dwell on greatest things ; if you would be high, then seek the things that are above, and not the sordid things of

earth, (Col. iii. 1—3,) and if you would be safe, look after the enemies of your peace; and as you had thoughts of sin that led you to commit it, entertain the thoughts that would lead you to abhor it. O that I might have but the grant of this reasonable request from you, that among all your thoughts you would bestow now and then an hour in the serious thoughts of your misdoings, and soberly in your retirement between God and your souls remember the paths that you have trod; and whether you have lived for the work for which you were created! One sober hour of such employment might be the happiest hour that ever you spent, and give you more comfort at your final hour, than all the former hours of your life; and might lead you into that new and holy life, which you may review with everlasting comfort.

Truly, gentlemen, I have long observed that Satan's advantage lieth so much on the brutish side, and that the work of man's conversion is so much carried on by God's exciting of our reason; and that the misery of the ungodly is, that they have reason in faculty, and not in use, in the greatest things, that I persuade you to this duty with the greater hopes: if the Lord will but persuade you to retire from vanity, and soberly exercise your reason, and consider your ways, and say, what have we done? And what is it that God would have us do? And what shall we wish we had done at last? I say, could you now be but prevailed with to bestow as many hours on this work, as you have cast away in idleness, or worse, I should not doubt but I should shortly see the faces of many of you in heaven that have been recovered by the use of this advice. It is a thousand pities, that men that are thought wise enough to be entrusted with the public safety, and to be the physicians of a broken state, should have any among them that are untrusty to their God, and have not the reason to remember their misdoings, and prevent the danger of their immortal souls. Will you sit all day here to find out the remedy of a diseased land; and will you not be entreated by God or man to sit down one hour, and find out the disease of, and remedy for, your own souls? Are those men likely to take care of the happiness of so many thousands, that will still be so careless of themselves? Once more therefore, I entreat you, remember your misdoings, lest God remember them: and bless the Lord that called you this day, by the voice of mercy, to remember them upon terms of faith and hope. Remembered they must be, first or last. And

believe it, this is far unlike the sad remembrance at judgment, and in the place of woe and desperation.

And I beseech you observe here, that it is your own misdoings that you must remember. Had it been only the sins of other men, especially those that differ from you, or have wronged you, or stand against your interest, how easily would the duty have been performed? How little need should I have had to press it with all this importunity? How confident should I be that I could convert the most, if this were the conversion? It grieves my soul to hear how quick and constant, high and low, learned and unlearned, are at this uncharitable, contumelious remembering of the faults of others: how cunningly they can bring in their insinuated accusations: how odiously they can aggravate the smallest faults, where difference causeth them to distaste the person: how ordinarily they judge of actions by the persons, as if any thing were a crime that is done by such as they dislike, and all were virtue that is done by those that fit their humours: how commonly brethren have made it a part of their service of God to speak or write uncharitably of his servants, labouring to destroy the hearer's charity, which had more need, in this unhappy time, of the bellows than the water! How useful it is with the ignorant that cannot reach the truth, and the impious that cannot bear it, to call such heretics that know more than themselves, and to call such precisians, puritans, (or some such name which hell invents as there is occasion,) who dare not be so bad as they! How odious, men pretending to much gravity, learning, and moderation, do labour to make those that are dearer to God; and what an heart they have to widen differences, and make a sea of every lake; and that, perhaps, under pretence of blaming the uncharitableness of others! How far the very sermons and discourses of some learned men are from the common rule of doing as we would be done by: and how loudly they proclaim that such men love not their neighbours as themselves; the most uncharitable words seeming moderate, which they give; and all called intemperate that savoureth not of flattery, which they receive! Were I calling the several exasperated factions now in England to remember the misdoings of their supposed adversaries, what full-mouthed and debasing confessions would they make! What monsters of heresy, and schism, of impiety, treason, and rebellion, of perjury and perfidiousness, would too many make of the faults of others, while they extenuate their

own to almost nothing ! It is a wonder to observe how the case doth alter with the most, when that which was their adversary's case becomes their own. The very prayers of the godly, and their care of their salvation, and the fear of sinning, doth seem their crime in the eyes of some that easily bear the guilt of swearing, drunkenness, sensuality, filthiness, and neglect of duty in themselves, as a tolerable burden.

But if ever God indeed convert you, (though you will pity others, yet) he will teach you to begin at home, and take the beam out of your own eyes, and to cry out, ' I am the miserable sinner.'

And lest these generals seem insufficient for us to confess on such a day as this, and lest yet your memories should need more help, is it not my duty to remind you of some particulars ? which yet I shall not do by way of accusation, but of inquiry. Far be it from me to judge so hardly of you, that when you come hither to lament your sins you cannot with patience endure to be told of them.

1. Inquire, then, whether there be none among you that live a sensual, careless life, clothed with the best, and faring deliciously every day ? In rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying, not putting on Christ, nor walking in the Spirit, but making provision for the flesh, to satisfy the lusts thereof. (Rom. xiii. 13, 14.) Is there none among you that spend your precious time in vanities, that is allowed you to prepare for life eternal ? That have time to waste in compliments, and fruitless talk, and visits, in gaming, and unnecessary recreations, in excessive feasting and entertainments, while God is neglected, and your souls forgotten, and you can never find an hour in a day to make ready for the life which you must live for ever ! Is there none among you that would take the man for a puritan or fanatic that should employ but half so much time for his soul, and in the services of the Lord, as you do in unnecessary sports and pleasures, and pampering your flesh ? Gentlemen, if there be any such among you as you, love your souls, remember your misdoings, and bewail these abominations before the Lord, in this day of your professed humiliation !

2. Inquire whether there be none among you, that, being strangers to the new birth, and to the inward workings of the Spirit of Christ upon the soul, do also distaste a holy life, and make it a matter of your reproach, and pacify your accusing consciences

with a religion made up of mere words, and heartless outside, and so much obedience as your fleshly pleasures will admit, accounting those that go beyond you, especially if they differ from you in your modes and circumstances, to be but a company of proud, pharisaical, self-conceited hypocrites, and those whom you desire to suppress. If there be one such person here, I would entreat him to remember that it is the solemn asseveration of our Judge, that “except a man be converted, and be born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; (John iii. 3—5; Matt. xviii. 3;) that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;” (Rom. viii. 9;) that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new;” (2 Cor. v. 17;) that “without holiness none shall see God;” (Heb. xii. 14;) that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable;” (Jam. iii. 17;) that “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit, and in truth;” (John iv. 23, 24;) that “they worship in vain that teach for doctrines the commandments of men;” (Matt. xv. 8, 9;) and that “except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. v. 20.) And I desire you to remember that it is hard to kick against the pricks, and to prosper in rage against the Lord: and that it is better for that man that offendeth one of his little ones to have a millstone fastened to his neck, and to have been cast into the bottom of the sea. (Matt. xviii. 6.) It is a sure and grievous condemnation that waiteth for all that are themselves unholy: but to the haters or despisers of the holy laws and servants of the Lord how much more grievous a punishment is reserved!

3. Inquire also whether there be none among you that let loose your passions on your inferiors, and oppress your poor tenants, and make them groan under the task, or at least do little to relieve the needy, nor study not to serve the Lord with your estates, but sacrifice all to the pleasing of your flesh, unless it be some inconsiderable pittance, or fruitless drops, that are unproportionable to your receivings. If there be any such, let them remember their iniquities, and cry for mercy before the cry of the poor to heaven do bring down vengeance from him that hath promised to hear their cry, and speedily to avenge them. (Luke xviii. 7, 8.)

4. Inquire whether there be none that live the life of Sodom,

in pride, fulness of bread, and idleness ; (Ezek. xvi. 49 ;) and that are not puffed up with their estates and dignities, and are strangers to the humility, meekness, patience, and self-denial of the saints : that ruffle in bravery, and contend more zealously for their honour and pre-eminence, than for the honour and interest of the Lord. For pride of apparel, it was wont to be taken for a childish or a womanish kind of vice, below a man ; but it is now observed among the gallants, that (except in spots) the notes of vanity are more legibly written on the hair and dress of a multitude of effeminate males, than on the females ; proclaiming to the world that pride, which one would think even pride itself should have concealed ; and calling by these signs to the beholders to observe the emptiness of their minds, and how void they are of that inward worth, which is the honour of a Christian, and of a man. It being a marvel to see a man of learning, gravity, wisdom, and the fear of God, appear in such an antic dress.

I have done with the first part, “ the remembering of your own evil ways and doings.” I beseech you practically go along with me to the next ; “ The loathing of yourselves in your own eyes, for all your iniquities and abominations.”

Every true convert doth thus loathe himself for his iniquities : and when God will restore a punished people upon their repentance he bringeth them to this loathing of themselves.

1. A converted soul hath a new and heavenly light to help him to see those matters of humbling use, which others see not.

2. More particularly, he hath the knowledge of sin, and of himself. He seeth the odious face of sin, and seeth how much his heart and life in his sinful days abounded with it, and how great a measure yet remains.

3. He hath seen by faith the Lord himself ; the majesty, the holiness, the jealousy, the goodness of the eternal God whom he hath offended, and therefore must needs abhor himself. (Job xlii. 6.)

4. He hath tasted of God’s displeasure against him for his sin already. God himself hath set it home, and awakened his conscience, and held it on, till he hath made him understand that the consuming fire is not to be jested with.

5. He hath seen Christ crucified, and mourned over him. This is the glass that doth most clearly show the ugliness of sin, and here he hath learned to abhor himself.

6. He hath foreseen, by faith, the end of sin, and the doleful

recompense of the ungodly ; his faith beholdeth the misery of damned souls, and the glory which sinners cast away. He heareth them beforehand repenting, and lamenting, and crying out of their former folly, and wishing in vain that all this were to do again, and that they might once more be tried with another life, and resolving then how holily, how self-denyingly they would live ! He knows that if sin had had its way he had been plunged into this hellish misery himself ; and therefore he must needs loathe himself for his iniquities.

7. Moreover, the true convert hath had the liveliest taste of mercy, of the blood of Christ, of the offers and covenant of grace, of reprieving mercy, of pardoning mercy, of healing and preserving mercy, and of the unspeakable mercy contained in the promise of everlasting life ; and to find that he hath sinned against all this mercy doth constrain him to abhor himself.

8. And it is only the true convert that hath a new and holy nature, contrary to sin ; and, therefore, as a man that hath the leprosy doth loathe himself because his nature is contrary to his disease, so is it (though operating in a freer way) with a converted soul as to the leprosy of sin. Oh ! how he loathes the remnants of his pride and passion ; his excessive cares, desires, and fears ; the backwardness of his soul to God and heaven ! Sin is to the new nature of every true believer, as the food of a swine to the stomach of a man ; if he have eaten it, he hath no rest until he hath vomited it up ; and then when he looketh on his vomit, he loatheth himself to think how long he kept such filth within him ; and that yet in the bottom there is some remains.

9. The true convert is one that is much at home, his heart is the vineyard which he is daily dressing, his work is ordinarily about it, and, therefore, he is acquainted with those secret sins, and daily failings, which ungodly men that are strangers to themselves do not observe, though they have them in dominion.

10. Lastly, a serious Christian is a workman of the Lord's, and daily busy at the exercise of his graces, and, therefore, hath occasion to observe his weaknesses, and failings, and from sad experience is forced to abhor himself.

But with careless unrenewed souls it is not so ; some of them may have a mild, ingenuous disposition, and the knowledge of their unworthiness ; and customarily they will confess such sins as are small disgrace to them, or cannot be hid ; or under the terrible gripes of conscience, in the hour of distress, and at the approach of death, they will do more ; and abhor themselves,

perhaps, as Judas did ; or make a constrained confession through the power of fear ; but so far are they from this loathing of themselves for all their iniquities, that sin is to them as their element, their food, their nature, and their friend.

And now, honourable, worthy, and beloved auditors, it is my duty to inquire, and to provoke you to inquire, whether the representative body of the Commons of England, and each man of you in particular, be thus affected to yourselves or not. It concerns you to inquire of it, as you love your souls, and love not to see the death marks of impenitency on them. It concerneth us to inquire of it, as we love you and the nation, and would fain see the marks of God's return in mercy to us, in your self-loathing and return to God. Let conscience speak as before the Lord that sees your hearts, and will shortly judge you, have you had such a sight of your natural and actual sin and misery, of your neglect of God, your contempt of heaven, your loss of precious, hasty time, your worldly, fleshly, sensual lives, and your omission of the great and holy works which you were made for ? Have you had such a sight and sense of these as hath filled your souls with shame and sorrow ? and caused you in tears, or hearty grief, to lament your sinful, careless lives, before the Lord. Do you loathe yourselves for all this, as being vile in your own eyes, and each man say, ' What a wretch was I ! what an unreasonable, self-hating wretch, to do all this against myself ! what an unnatural wretch ! what a monster of rebellion and ingratitude, to do all this against the Lord of love and mercy ! what a deceived, foolish wretch, to prefer the pleasing of my lusts and senses, a pleasure that perisheth in the fruition, and is past as soon as it is received, before the manly pleasures of the saints, and before the soul's delight in God, and before the unspeakable everlasting pleasures ! Was there any comparison between the brutish pleasures of the flesh, and the spiritual delights of a believing soul, in looking to the endless pleasure which we shall have with all the saints and angels in the glorious presence of the Lord ? Was God and glory worth no more, than to be cast aside for satiating of an unsatisfiable flesh and fancy, and to be sold for a harlot, for a forbidden cup, for a little air of popular applause, or for a burdensome load of wealth and power, for so short a time ? Where is now the gain and pleasure of all my former sins ? What have they left but a sting behind them ? How near is the time when my departing soul must look back on all the pleasures and profits that ever I enjoyed, as a dream when

one awaketh ; as delusory vanities, that have done all for me that ever they will do, and all is but to bring my flesh unto corruption, (Gal. vi. 8,) and my soul to this distressing grief and fear ? and then I must sing and laugh no more ! I must brave it out in pride no more ! I must know the pleasures of the flesh no more ! but be levelled with the poorest, and my body laid in loathsome darkness, and my soul appear before that God whom I so wilfully refused to obey and honour. O wretch that I am ! where was my understanding, when I played so boldly with the flames of hell, the wrath of God, the poison of sin ! when God stood by and yet I sinned ! when conscience did rebuke me, and yet I sinned ! when heaven or hell were hard at hand, and yet I sinned ! when, to please my God, and save my soul, I would not forbear a filthy lust, or forbidden vanity of no worth ! when I would not be persuaded to a holy, heavenly, watchful life, though all my hopes of heaven lay on it ! I am ashamed of myself ; I am confounded in the remembrance of my wilful, self-destroying folly ! I loathe myself for all my abominations ; O that I had lived in beggary and rags when I lived in sin ! And O that I had lived with God in a prison, or in a wilderness, when I refused a holy, heavenly life, for the love of a deceitful world ! Will the Lord pardon what is past, I am resolved through his grace to do so no more, but to loathe that filth that I took for pleasure, and to abhor that sin that I made my sport, and to die to the glory and riches of the world, which I made my idol ; and to live entirely to that God that I did so long ago and so unworthily neglect ; and to seek that treasure, that kingdom, that delight, that will fully satisfy my expectation, and answer all my care and labour, with such infinite advantage. Holiness or nothing shall be my work and life, and heaven or nothing shall be my portion and felicity.

These are the thoughts, the affections, the breathing of every regenerate, gracious soul. For your souls' sake inquire now, is it thus with you ? Or have you thus returned with self-loathing to the Lord, and firmly engaged your souls to him at your entrance into a holy life ? I must be plain with you, gentlemen, or I shall be unfaithful ; and I must deal closely with you, or I cannot deal honestly and truly with you. As sure as you live, yea, as sure as the word of God is true, you must all be such converted men, and loathe yourselves for your iniquities, or be condemned as impenitent to everlasting fire. To hide this from you is but to deceive you, and that in a matter of a thou-

sand times greater moment than your lives. Perhaps I could have made shift, instead of such serious admonitions, to have wasted this hour in flashy oratory, and neat expressions, and ornaments of reading, and other things that are the too common matters of ostentation with men that preach God's word in jest, and believe not what they are persuading others to believe. Or if you think I could not, I am indifferent, as not much affecting the honour of being able to offend the Lord, and wrong your souls, by dallying with holy things. Flattery in these things of soul concernment is a selfish villany, that hath but a very short reward, and those that are pleased with it to-day, may curse the flatterer for ever. Again, therefore, let me tell you that which I think you will confess, that it is not your greatness, not your high looks, not the gallantry of your spirits that scorns to be thus humbled, that will serve your turn when God shall deal with you, or save your carcasses from rottenness and dust, or your guilty souls from the wrath of the Almighty. Nor is it your contempt of the threatenings of the Lord, and your stupid neglect, or scorning at the message, that will endure when the sudden, irresistible light shall come in upon you, and convince you, or you shall see and feel what now you refuse to believe! Nor is it your outside, hypocritical religion, made up of mere words, or ceremonies, and giving your souls but the leavings of the flesh, and making God an underling to the world, that will do any more to save your souls than the picture of a feast to feed your bodies. Nor is it the stiffest conceits that you shall be saved in an unconverted state, or that you are sanctified when you are not, that will do any more to keep you from damnation than a conceit that you shall never die will do to keep you here for ever. Gentlemen, though you are all here in health and dignity, and honour, to day, how little a while is it, alas! how little, until you shall be every man in heaven or hell! Unless you are infidels you dare not deny it. And it is only Christ and a holy life that is your way to heaven; and only sin, and the neglect of Christ and holiness, that can undo you. Look, therefore, upon sin as you should look on that which would cast you into hell, and is daily undermining all your hopes. O that this honourable assembly could know it in some measure as it shall be shortly known! and judge of it as men do, when time is past, and delusions vanished, and all men are awakened from their fleshly dreams, and their naked souls have seen the Lord! O

then what laws would you make against sin ! How speedily would you join your strength against it as against the only enemy of your peace, and as against a fire in your houses, or a plague that were broken out upon the city where you are ! O then how zealously would you all concur to promote the interest of holiness in the land, and studiously encourage the servants of the Lord ! How severely would you deal with those, that by making a mock of godliness, do hinder the salvation of the people's souls ? How carefully would you help the labourers that are sent to guide men in the holy path ! and yourselves would go before the nation as an example of penitent self loathing for your sins, and hearty conversion to the Lord ! Is this your duty now ? or is it not ? If you cannot deny it, I warn you from the Lord do not neglect it ; and do not by your disobedience to a convinced conscience prepare for a tormenting conscience. If you know your Master's will, and do it not, you shall be beaten with many stripes.

And your public capacity and work doth make your repentance and holiness needful to others as well as to yourselves. Had we none to govern us, but such as entirely subject themselves to the government of Christ ; and none to make us laws, but such as have his law transcribed upon their hearts, O what a happy people should we be ! Men are unlikely to make strict laws against the vices which they love and live in ; or if they make them, they are more unlikely to execute them. We can expect no great help against drunkenness, swearing, gaming, filthiness, and profaneness, from men that love these abominations so well, as that they will rather part with God and their salvation than they will let them go. All men are born with a serpentine malice and enmity against the seed of Christ, which is rooted in their very natures. Custom in sin increaseth this to malignity ; and it is only renewed grace that doth overcome it. If, therefore, there should be any among our rulers that are not cured of this mortal malady, what friendship can be expected from them to the cause and servants of the Lord ? If you are all the children of God yourselves, and heaven be your end, and holiness your delight and business, it will then be your principal care to encourage it, and help the people to the happiness that you have found yourselves. But if in any the original (increased) enmity to God and godliness prevail, we can expect no better (ordinarily) from such, than that they oppose the holiness which they hate, and do their worst to make us miserable. But wo

to him that striveth against his Maker. Shall the thorns and briars be set in battle against the consuming fire and prevail? (Isaiah xxvii. 4, 5.) Oh! therefore, for the nation's sake, begin at home, and cast away the sins which you would have the nation cast away! All men can say, that ministers must teach by their lives, as well as by their doctrines; (and wo to them that do not!) and must not magistrates as well govern by their lives, as by their laws? Will you make laws which you would not have men obey? Or would you have the people to be better than yourselves? Or can you expect to be obeyed by others, when you will not obey the God of heaven and earth yourselves? We beseech you, therefore, for the sake of a poor distressed land, let our recovery begin with you. God looks so much at the rulers of a nation in his dealings with them, that ordinarily it goes with the people as their rulers are. Until David had numbered the people, God would not let out his wrath upon them, though it was they that were the great offenders. If we see our representative body begin in loathing themselves for all their iniquities, and turning to the Lord with all their hearts, we should yet believe that he is returning to us, and will do us good after all our provocations. Truly, gentlemen, it is much from you that we must fetch our comfortable or sad prognostics of the life or death of this diseased land. Whatever you do, I know that it shall go well with the righteous; but for the happiness or misery of the nation in general it is you that are our best prognostication. If you repent yourselves, and become a holy people to the Lord, it promiseth us deliverance; but if you harden your hearts, and prove despisers of God and holiness, it is like to be our temporal, and sure to be your eternal undoing, if saving grace do not prevent it.

And I must needs tell you, that if you be not brought to loathe yourselves, it is not because there is no loathsome matter in you. Did you see your inside you could not forbear it. As I think it would somewhat abate the pride of the most curious gallants, if they did but see what a heap of phlegm, and filth, and dung, (and perhaps crawling worms,) there is within them; much more should it make you loathe yourselves if you saw those sins that are a thousand times more odious. And to instigate you hereunto, let me further reason with you.

1. You can easily loathe an enemy; and who hath been a greater enemy to any of you than yourselves? Another may injure you; but no man can everlastingly undo you, but yourselves.

2. You abhor him that kills your dearest friends ; and it is you by your sins that have put to death the Lord of life.

3. Who is it but yourselves that hath robbed you of so much precious time, and so much precious fruit of ordinances, and of all the mercies of the Lord ?

4. Who is it but yourselves that hath brought you under God's displeasure ? Poverty could not have made him loathe you, nor anything besides your sins.

5. Who wounded conscience, and hath raised all your doubts and fears ? Was it not your sinful selves ?

6. Who is it but yourselves that hath brought you so near the gulf of misery, and endangered your eternal peace ?

7. Consider the loathsome nature of your sins, and how then can you choose but loathe yourselves ?

1. It is the creature's rebellion or disobedience against the Absolute Universal Sovereign.

2. It is the deformity of God's noblest creature here on earth, and the abusing of the most noble faculties.

3. It is a stain so deep that nothing can wash out but the blood of Christ. The flood that drowned a world of sinners did not wash away their sins. The fire that consumed the Sodomites did not consume their sins. Hell itself can never end it, and, therefore, shall have no end itself. It dieth not with you when you die ; though churchyards are the guiltiest spots of ground, they do not bury and hide our sin.

4. The church must loathe it, and must cast out the sinner as loathsome, if he remain impenitent ; and none of the servants of the Lord must have any friendship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

5. God himself doth loathe the creature for sin, and for nothing else but sin, " My soul loathed them ;" (Zech. xi. 8;) " When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters ;" (Deut. xxxii. 19;) " My soul shall abhor you ;" (Lev. xxvi. 30;) " When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel ;" (Psalm lxxviii. 59;) " He abhorred his very sanctuary ;" (Lam. ii. 7;) " For he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." (Hab. i. 13.) In a word, it is the sentence of God himself, that a " wicked man is loathsome and cometh to shame," (Prov. xiii. 5,) so that you see what abundant cause of self-abhorrence is among us.

But we are much afraid of God's departure, when we see how common self-love is in the world, and how rare this penitent self-loathing is.

1. Do they loathe themselves that on every occasion are contending for their honour, and exalting themselves, and venturing their very souls, to be highest in the world for a little while?

2. Do they loathe themselves that are readier to justify all their sins, or at least to extenuate them, than humbly confess them?

3. Do they loathe themselves for all their sins that cannot endure to be reprov'd, but loathe their friends and the ministers of Christ that tell them of their loathsomeness?

4. Do they loathe themselves that take their pride itself for manhood, and christian humility for baseness, and brokenness of heart for whining hypocrisy or folly, and call them a company of priest-ridden fools that lament their sin, and ease their souls by free confession? Is the ruffling bravery of this city, and the strange attire, the haughty carriage, the feasting, idleness, and pomp, the marks of such as loathe themselves for all their abominations? Why then was fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes, the badge of such in ancient times?

5. Do they loathe themselves for all their sins, who loathe those that will not do as they, and speak reproachfully of such as run not with them to the same excess of riot, (1 Peter iv. 4,) and count them precisians that dare not spit in the face of Christ, by wilful sinning as venturously and madly as themselves?

6. Or do they loathe themselves for all their sins, that love their sins even better than their God, and will not by all the obtestations, and commands, and entreaties of the Lord, be persuaded to forsake them? How far all these are from this self-loathing, and how far that nation is from happiness, where the rulers or inhabitants are such, is easy to conjecture.

I should have minded you what sins of the land must be remembered, and loathed, if we would have peace and healing. But as the glass forbids me, so alas, as the sins of Sodom, they declare themselves. Though through the great mercy of the Lord, the body of this nation, and the sober part, have not been guilty of that covenant-breaking, perfidiousness, treason, sedition, disobedience, self-exalting, and turbulency, as some have been, and as ignorant foreigners through the calumnies of malicious adversaries may possibly believe; yet must it be for a lamentation through all generations, that any of those who went out from us have contracted the guilt of such abominations, and occasioned the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme; and that any in the pride or simplicity of their hearts have

followed the conduct of jesuitical seducers, they know not whither or to what.

That profaneness aboundeth on the other side, and drunkenness, swearing, fornication, lasciviousness, idleness, pride, and covetousness, doth still survive the ministers that have wasted themselves against them, and the labours of faithful magistrates to this day! And that the two extremes of heresy and profaneness do increase each other; and while they talk against each other, they harden one another, and both afflict the church of Christ. But especially wo to England for that crying sin, *the scorning of a holy life*, if a wonder of mercy do not save us. That people, professing the christian religion, should scorn the diligent practice of that religion which themselves profess! That obedience to the God of heaven, that imitation of the example of our Saviour, who came from heaven to teach us holiness, should not only be neglected, unreasonably and impiously neglected, but also by a transcendent impious madness should be made a matter of reproach! That the Holy Ghost, into whose name, as the Sanctifier, these men were themselves baptised, should not only be resisted, but his sanctifying work be made a scorn! That it should be made a matter of derision for a man to prefer his soul before his body, and heaven before earth, and God before a transitory world, and to use his reason in that for which it was principally given him, and not to be wilfully mad in a case where madness will undo him unto all eternity! Judge, as you are men, whether hell itself is like much to exceed such horrid wickedness! And whether it be not an astonishing wonder that ever a reasonable soul should be brought to such a height of abomination! That they that profess to believe the holy catholic Church, and the communion of saints, should deride the holiness of the church, and the saints, and their communion! That they that pray for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will, even as it is done in heaven, should make a mock at all this that they pray for! How much further, think you, is it possible for wicked souls to go on sinning? Is it not the God of heaven himself that they make a scorn of? Is not holiness his image? Did not he make the law that doth command it; professing that none shall see his face without it? (Heb. xii. 14.) O sinful nation! O people laden with iniquity! Repent, repent speedily, and with self-loathing, repent of this inhuman crime, lest God should take away your glory, and enter himself into judgment

with you, and plead against you the scorn that you have cast upon the ^{Ch}ristator, the Saviour, the Sanctifier, to whom you were engaged in your baptismal vows! Lest when he plagueth and condemneth you, he say, "Why persecuted you me?" (Acts ix. 4.) "Inasmuch as ^{as} shst it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto ^{es} ^{Pres} ^{nt} Read Prov. i. 20, to the end. When Israel mocked the ^{ful} ^{na} ^{gers} of the Lord, and despised his words, and misused his ^{pr} ^{ice} ^{ol}, his wrath arose against his people till there was no remedy; (2 Chron. xxvi. 16;) and O that you who are the physicians of this diseased land would specially call them to repentance for this, and help them against it for the time to come!

Having called you first to remember your misdoings, and, secondly, to loathe yourselves in your own eyes for them, I must add a third, that you stop not here, but proceed to reformation, or else all the rest is but hypocrisy. And here it is that I most earnestly entreat this honourable assembly for their best assistance. O make not the forementioned sins your own, lest your hear from God, "*quod minus crimine, quam absolute peccatum est.*" Though England hath been used to cry loud for liberty, let them not have liberty to abuse their Maker, and to damn their souls, if you can hinder it. "*Optimus est reipublicæ status, ubi nulla libertas deest, nisi licentia pereundi,*" as Nero was once told by his unsuccessful tutor. Use not men to a liberty of scorning the laws of God, lest you teach them to scorn yours; for can you expect to be better used than God. And "*cui plus licet quam par est, plus vult quam licet.*" (Gell. i. 17., c. 14.) We have all seen the evils of liberty to be wanton in religion. Is it not worse to have liberty to deride religion? If men shall have leave to go quietly to hell themselves, let them not have leave to mock poor souls from heaven. The suffering to the sound in faith is as nothing; for what is the foaming rage of madmen to be regarded? But that in England God should be so provoked, and souls so hindered from the paths of life, that whoever will be converted and saved must be made a laughing stock, which carnal minds cannot endure; this is the mischief which we deprecate.

The eyes of the nation, and of the christian world, are much upon you, some high in hopes, some deep in fears, some waiting in dubious expectations for the issue of your counsels. Great expectations, in deep necessities, should awake you to the greatest care and diligence. Though I would not, by omit-

ting any necessary directions or admonitions to you, I invite the world to think that I speak to such as cannot endure to hear, and that so honourable an assembly doth call the ministers of Christ to do those works of their proper office, which yet they will be offended if they do, yet had I rather than in the defective part than by excess, and therefore shall I not presume to be too particular. Only in general, in the churches of Christ, and on the behalf of a trembling, yet hoping assembly, I most earnestly beseech and warn you, ~~show~~ you own and promote the power and practice of Godliness in the land, and that as God, whose ministers you are, (Rom. xiii. 4,) is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, (Heb. xi. 6,) and hath made this a principal article of our faith, so you would imitate your absolute Lord, and honour them that fear the Lord, and encourage them that diligently seek him. And may I not freely tell you that God should have the precedency? And that you must first seek his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, and he will facilitate all the rest of your work. Surely no powers on earth should be offended, that the God from whom, and for whom, and through whom, they have what they have, is preferred before them, when they should own no interest but his, and what is subservient to it. I have long thought that pretences of a necessity of beginning with our own affairs, hath frustrated our hopes from many parliaments already; and I am sure that by delays, the enemies of our peace have got advantage to cross our ends and attain their own. Our calamities begun in differences about religion, and still that is the wound that most needs closing. And if that were done, how easily, I dare confidently speak it, would the generality of sober, godly people, be agreed in things civil, and become the strength and glory of the sovereign, under God. And though, with grief and shame, we see this work so long undone, (may we hope that God hath reserved it to this season,) yet I have the confidence to profess, that, as the exalting of one party, by the ejection and persecuting of the rest, is the sinful way to your dishonour and our ruin, so the terms on which the differing parties most considerable among us may safely, easily, and suddenly unite, are very obvious, and our concord a very easy thing, if the prudent and moderate might be the guides, and selfish interests and passion did not set us at a further distance than our principles have done. And to show you the facility of such an agreement, were it not that such personal

matters are much liable to misinterpretations, I should tell you, that the late reverend Primate of Ireland consented, in less than half an hour's debate, to five or six propositions which I offered him, as sufficient for the concord of the moderate Episcopal and Presbyterians, without forsaking the principles of their parties. O that the Lord would yet show so much mercy to a sinful nation, as to put it into your hearts to promote but the practice of those christian principles which we are all agreed in! I hope there is no controversy among us whether God should be obeyed, and hell avoided, and heaven first sought, and Scripture be the rule and test of our religion, and sin abhorred and cast out. O that you would but further the practice of this with all your might! We crave not of you any lordship or dominion, nor riches, nor interest in your temporal affairs; we had rather see a law to exclude all ecclesiastics from all power of force. The God of heaven that will judge you and us will be a righteous judge betwixt us, whether we crave any thing unreasonable at your hands. These are the sum of our requests: 1. That holiness may be encouraged, and the overspreading profaneness of this nation effectually kept down. 2. That an able, diligent ministry may be encouraged, and not corrupted by temporal power. 3. That discipline may be seriously promoted, and ministers no more hindered by magistrates in the exercise of their office than physicians and schoolmasters are in theirs, seeing it is but a government like theirs, consisting in the liberty of conscionably managing the works of our own office that we expect. Give us but leave to labour in Christ's vineyard with such encouragement as the necessity of obstinate souls requireth, and we will ask no more. You have less cause to restrain us from discipline than from preaching. For it is a more flesh-displeasing work that we are hardlier brought to. I foretel you that you shut out me, and all that are of my mind, if you would force us to administer sacraments without discipline, and without the conduct of our own discretion, to whom the magistrate appoints it, as if a physician must give no physic but by your prescript. The antidisciplinarian magistrate I could as resolutely suffer under as the superstitious, it being worse to cast out discipline, than to err in the circumstances of it. The question is not, whether bishops or no, but whether discipline or none? And whether enough to use it? 4. We earnestly request that scripture sufficiency, as the test of our re-

ligion, and only universal law of Christ, may be maintained, and that nothing unnecessary may be imposed as necessary, nor the church's unity laid on that which will not bear it, nor ever did. O that we might but have leave to serve God only as Christ hath commanded us, and to go to heaven in the same way as the apostles did ! These are our desires, and whether they are reasonable, God will judge.

Give first to God the things that are God's, and then give Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Let your wisdom be first pure, and then peaceable. Not but that we are resolved to be loyal to sovereignty, though you deny us all these. Whatever malicious men pretend, that is not, nor shall not, be our difference. I have proved more publicly, when it was more dangerous to publish it, that the generality of the orthodox, sober ministers, and godly people of this nation, did never consent to king-killing, and resisting sovereign power, nor to the change of the ancient government of this land, but abhorred the pride and ambition that attempted it. I again repeat it, the blood of some, the imprisonment and displacing of others, the banishment or flight of others, and the detestations and public protestations of more ; the oft-declared sense of England, and the wars and sad estate of Scotland, have all declared before the world, to the shame of calumniators, that the generality of the orthodox, sober protestants of these nations, have been true to their allegiance, and detesters of unfaithfulness and ambition in subjects, and resisters of heresy and schism in the church, and of anarchy and democratical confusions in the commonwealth. And though the land hath ringed with complaints and threatenings against myself, for publishing a little of the mixture of jesuitical and familistical contrivances, for taking down together our government and religion, and setting up new ones for the introduction of popery, infidelity, and heresy, yet I am assured that there is much more of this confederacy for the all-seeing God to discover in time, to the shame of papists, that cannot be content to write themselves for the killing of kings when the pope hath once excommunicated them, and by the decrees of a general council at the Lateran, to depose princes that will extirpate such as the pope calls heretics, and absolve all their subjects from their fidelity and allegiance, but they must also creep into the councils and armies of protestants, and taking the advantage of successes and ambition, withdraw men at once from their religion and

allegiance, that they may cheat the world into a belief that treasons are the fruits of the protestant profession, when these masked jugglers have come by night, and sown and cherished these Romish tares. As a papist must cease to be a papist if he will be truly and fully loyal to his sovereign, (as I am ready to prove against any adversary,) so a protestant must so far cease to be a protestant, before he can be disloyal. For Rom. 13. is part of the rule of his religion. Unhappily there hath been a difference among us which is the higher power, when those that have their shares in the sovereignty are divided, but whether we should be subject to the higher power, is no question with us.

Gentlemen, I have nothing to ask of you for myself, nor any of my brethren, as for themselves, but that you will be friends to serious preaching and holy living, and will not ensnare our consciences with any unscriptural inventions of men. This I would beg of you as on my knees : 1. As for the sake of Christ, whose cause and people it is that I am pleading for. 2. For the sake of thousands of poor souls in this land, whose salvation or damnation will be much promoted by you. 3. For the sake of thousands of the dear servants of the Lord, whose eyes are waiting to see what God will do by your hands. 4. For your own sakes, who are undone if you dash yourselves on the rock you should build on, and set against the holy God, and turn the cries of his servants to heaven for deliverance from you. (Luke xviii. 8.) If you stumble on Christ, he will break you in pieces ; but if he fall upon you, he will grind you to powder. 5. For the sake of your posterity, that they may not be bred up in ignorance or ungodliness. 6. For the honour of the nation and yourselves, that you turn by all the suspicions and fears that are raised in the land. 7. For the honour of sound doctrine and church-government, that you may not bring schism into greater credit than now you have brought it to deserved shame. For if you frown on godliness under pretence of uniformity in unnecessary things, and make times worse than when libertinism and schism so prevailed, the people will look back with groans, and say, ‘ What happy times did we once see ! ’ And so will honour schism, and libertinism, and usurpation, through your oppression. 8. Lastly, I beg this of you, for the honour of sovereignty, and the nation’s peace. A prince of a holy people is most honourable. The interest of holiness is Christ’s own. Happy is that prince that espous-

eth this, and subjecteth all his own unto it. (See Psalm i. 1, 2, and ci., and xv. 4.) It is the conscionable, prudent, godly people of the land, that must be the glory and strength of their lawful sovereign. Their prayers will serve him better than the hideous oaths and curses of the profane. Wo to the rulers that set themselves against the interest of Christ and holiness ! (Read Psalm ii. ;) or that make snares for their consciences, that they may persecute them as disobedients, who are desirous to obey their rulers in subordination to the Lord. (See Dan. iii., and vi. 5, 10, 13.) I have dealt plainly with you, and told you the very truth. If God have now a blessing for you and us, you will obey it, but if you refuse, then look to yourselves, and answer it if you can. I am sure, in spite of earth and hell, it shall go well with them that live by faith.

RIGHT REJOICING :

OR, THE

NATURE AND ORDER

OF

RATIONAL AND WARRANTABLE JOY ;

DISCOVERED IN A

SERMON PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S

BEFORE THE

LORD MAYOR AND ALDERMEN,

AND THE SEVERAL COMPANIES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

On May 10th. 1660,

APPOINTED BY BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT TO BE A DAY OF SOLEMN
THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S RAISING UP AND SUCCEEDING HIS
EXCELLENCY, AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS,

IN ORDER TO

HIS MAJESTY'S RESTORATION,

AND THE SETTLEMENT OF THESE NATIONS.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS ALLEYNE,
LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON,
WITH THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL ALDERMEN,
HIS BRETHREN.

As, in obedience to your favourable invitation, this Sermon was first preached; and the Author, conscious of his great unworthiness, employed in so honourable a work; so is it your pleasure, against which my judgment must not here contest, that hath thus exposed it to the public view; which yet I must confess doth not engage you in the patronage of any of the crudities and imperfections of this hasty work, it being the matter, which is of God, that so far prevailed for your acceptance as to procure your pardon of the manner, which is too much my own. Rejoicing is so highly valued, even by nature, that I thought it a matter of great necessity to help to rectify and elevate your joys. The corruption of a thing so excellent must needs be very bad; and it being the great and durable good that must feed all great and durable joy; and seeing these little transitory things can cause but little and transitory delight, I thought it my duty to insist most on the greatest on which, in your meditations, you must most insist; which I repent not of, especially now you have given my doctrine a more loud and lasting voice, because it is only our heavenly interest that may be the matter of universal continued delight: and so the subject may make the sermon to be of

the more universal and continued use, when a subject of less excellency and duration than heaven would have depressed and limited the discourse, as to its usefulness. And also I was forced in this, as in all these sublunary things, to estimate the mercy in which we did all so solemnly rejoice but as a means, which is so far to be valued as it conduceth to its end; and is something or nothing as it relateth to eternity. Since I placed my hopes above, and learned to live a life of faith, I never desire to know any mercy in any other form or name, nor value it on any other account, as not affecting to make such reckonings which I daily see obliterated in grief and shame by those that make them; and remembering who said, that if we had known Christ himself after the flesh, henceforth we know him so no more. As it was my compassion to the frantic merry world, and also to the self-troubling melancholy Christian, and my desire methodically to help you in your rejoicings about the great occasions of the day, which formed this exhortation to what you heard, and chose the subject which, to some, might seem less suitable to the day; so, if the publication may print so great and necessary a point on the hearts of any that had not the opportunity to hear, as God shall have the praise, and they the joy, so you shall have, under God, the thanks, and I the attainment of my end, which is my reward: I rest,

Your servant in the work of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

RIGHT REJOICING.

LUKE x. 20.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you ; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Right Honourable, Worshipful, and Beloved Auditors,

IF any of you shall say, upon the hearing of my text, that I have chosen a subject unsuitable to the occasion, and that a “rejoice not” is out of season on a day of such rejoicing, they may, I hope, be well satisfied by that time they have considered the reason of these words, as used by Christ to his disciples, and the greater joy that is here commanded, and so the reason of my choice.

When Christ had sent forth his seventy disciples to preach the gospel through the cities of Judea, and to confirm it by miraculous cures, for which he endued them with power from above, upon their return they triumph especially in this, that “the devils themselves were subject to them through the name of Christ.” (Ver. 17.) A mercy which Christ is so far from extenuating that, 1. He sets it forth more fully than they, (ver. 18,) “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” 2. He promised them yet more of it, “giving them power to tread on serpents, and on scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and that nothing should by any means hurt them.” 3. He rejoiceth in spirit, and thankfully acknowledged it to the father himself. (Ver. 21.) And yet he seems here to forbid them to rejoice in it, commanding them another joy. What ! was it not a mercy to be rejoiced in ? Or is there any contradiction in the words of Christ ? Neither : he doth not absolutely forbid them to rejoice in it ; but he saw that their corruption took an advantage by it, to puff them up with pride and vain glory, and that they savoured it too carnally, and were much taken with it, as it was a visible triumph and honour to themselves the instruments, and too much overlooked the end and use of it. Christ

therefore aggravateth the mercy in its proper notion, as it was to the honouring of the father and himself, and the advancement of his kingdom, and the saving of men's souls, by the confirmation of the gospel, and the fall of Satan. But the shell or grosser substance of the mercy applied to a wrong end, and by corruption made another thing, being deprived of its proper soul, this Christ admonisheth them to keep out of their estimation and affection. He meeteth his returning messengers rejoicing too much in themselves: and this proud, inordinate, selfish joy is it that he would take from them by his caution or prohibition, "In this rejoice not." But that they may see that he doth not envy them their comforts, he sheweth them cause of a greater joy, which he alloweth and commandeth them, as more suitable to his ends and their felicity: "But rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

For better understanding of this you may observe; 1. What matter of joy the subjection of the devils might afford them. 2. What manner of joy they were affected with, which Christ forbad them. 3. What manner of joy it is that Christ alloweth them, when he seemeth to restrain it wholly to their heavenly interest.

1. No doubt, to have the devils subject to them was a great mercy, in which they might rejoice. For, 1. It was the gift of Christ: and all is perfumed that hath touched his hand. Nothing but good can come from him that is so good, by way of gift.

2. It was a gift foretold by the prophets, as reserved for the gospel time, that is eminently called the kingdom of God: and an extraordinary gift in respect to the precedent and subsequent generations. It was no usual thing for men to exercise such authority over the very devils, as to command them to come forth, and to heal the bodies that they had long afflicted.

3. It was a victory over the strongest enemy, that can make more effectual resistance than the most numerous armies of poor mortals, and would laugh at your horse and arms, your fire and sword, your greatest cannons: and cannot be expugned but by the power of the Almighty. A stronger than he must come upon him, and bind him, and cast him out of his possession, before he will surrender the garrison, goods, and prisoners, which he hath held in peace, (Luke xi. 31, 22.)

4. It was a victory over the most subtle enemy, that is not conquerable by any stratagems of human wit.

5. It was a victory over the most malicious enemy, that

sought more than the subversion of men's temporal peace, and by afflicting the body intended the hurting of the soul.

6. It was a conquest of him that had long possession, and one way or other kept in bondage the prisoners that justice had subjected to his rage.

7. It was a victory exceeding honourable to Christ, whose very messengers, by his name alone, could make the powers of hell submit. He that refused to be made a king, as having not a kingdom of this world, (John xviii. 36,) and that had not a place to lay his head on; (Matt. viii. 22;) commanded him that had presumed to tempt him with all the kingdoms and the glory of the world! (Matt. iv. 8, 9;) and that not only by the bare word of his mouth, but by the word of his meanest, most despised messengers; which made the people stand amazed, saying, what manner of man is this?

8. It was a victory tending to the successes of the gospel, to convince the unbelieving world, and so to enlarge the kingdom of Christ, and to save the people's souls.

9. And also from so great a work it was no small honour that accrued to the instruments: an honour which, in its proper place, they might lawfully regard.

10. And all this was aggravated by the congruency of the mercy to the low, despised condition of the instruments, (and of Christ himself,) when they were destitute of all common advantages and means, for the carrying on of so great and necessary a work, surpassing all the strength of flesh: how seasonable was it that the Omnipotency of heaven should then appear for them, and thus engage itself for their success. So that in all this you may easily see that here was abundant matter for a rational, warrantable joy to the disciples.

II. But where then was their fault? And what was that joy which Christ forbade them? *Answer.* Having already told you in general, I shall tell you more particularly. 1. They looked too much at the matter of dominion over the subjected and ejected devils and relished most delightfully the external part. As the Jews looked for a Messiah that should come in grandeur, and bring the nations under his dominion; so the disciples that had yet too much of these conceits began to be lifted up with the expectation of some earthly glory, when they saw the powers of hell submit, and Christ thus begin with the manifestation of his omnipotency. But the great end of these miracles they too much overlooked: they too much left out of the rejoicings the

appearances of God, the advantages of faith, the promotion of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and the greater mercies of the gospel, as to themselves and others.

2. They took too great a share of the honour to themselves, being more affected to see what great things they were made the instruments to accomplish, than what honour did thereby accrue to God and benefit to man; and thus, while they arrogate too much to themselves, and withal too much overlook those higher, greater mercies, to which all their miracles were but means, they deservedly fall under Christ's reproof; and he is employed in the cure of their diseased joys, by amputation of the superfluities, and rectifying the irregularities, and supplying the defects, lest Satan should take possession of their souls, by carnality, selfishness, and pride, when they thought they had conquered him, by dispossessing him of men's bodies.

III. By this you may understand what joy it is that Christ alloweth and commandeth them.

1. As to themselves, to kill their pride, and to increase their kindly joy and thankfulness, and to advance their estimation of the riches of the gospel, and rectify their judgment of the work and kingdom of their Lord, he calls them to mind that higher mercy, which is worthy of their greatest joy. An interest in heaven is another kind of mercy than healing the sick, or casting out devils here on earth.

2. In reference to his honour, he would have them first look at the greatest of his gifts, and not forget the glory which he finally intends them, while they are taken up with these wonders in the way; for his greatest honour ariseth from his greatest mercies.

3. As to the degrees of their rejoicing, he would not have them give the greater share to the lesser mercy, but to rejoice so much more in their heavenly interest, as that all other joy should be as none in comparison of it: so that this "Rejoice not in this," &c. is as much as if he had said, 'Let your rejoicing in this power over the devils be as nothing in comparison of your rejoicing that your names are written in heaven.' Just as he forbiddeth care and labour for these earthly things, when he saith, "Care not what ye shall eat," &c.; (Matt. vi. 25;) "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you." (John vi. 27.) Our care and labour for earthly things must be nothing, in comparison of the care and labour we are at for hea-

ven: and so our joy, in the greatest of these outward mercies, should be as nothing, in comparison of our joy in higher things.

4. As to the nature and order of the thing, he alloweth them no joy in this, or any temporal or created thing whatsoever, but as it proceedeth from God, and tendeth to him as our ultimate end. We must not rejoice in our victories over Satan, or any other enemy, for itself, and as our end, but as it is a means to the glory of God and men's salvation. In all which, it is evident that Christ doth but regulate and advance their joy, and calleth them first to rejoice in that which is their end and all, and animateth all their lower mercies; he then alloweth and requireth them to rejoice, even in this, which he seemed to forbid them to rejoice in, viz., that the devils were subject to them, so they do it in due subordination to its end.

The only difficulty in the preceptive part of the text is, what is meant here by the "Writing of their names in heaven." In a word, the meaning is, that they are "fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God;" and having a room among the saints on earth, have a title to the celestial glory. As in some well-ordered cities there were rolls kept of the names of all the citizens, or freemen, as distinct from all the inferior, more servile, sort of subjects; and as muster-rolls are kept of the listed soldiers of the army, so all that are saints are enrolled citizens of heaven, that is, are the heirs of the heavenly felicity.

We are decreed to this state before the foundations of the world; we are redeemed to it by the death of Christ; but we are not actually entered into it till we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and heartily engaged to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the holy covenant.

The doctrine of the text is contained in this proposition—To have our names written in heaven is the greatest mercy, and first, and chiefly, and only for itself to be rejoiced in; which so puts the estimate on all inferior mercies, that further than they refer to this they are not to be the matter of our joy.

Though we had seen the devils subjected to our ministration, departing from the possessed when we command them in the name of Christ, and the bodies of the afflicted miraculously relieved; yet all this were not, comparatively, to be rejoiced in, not as separated from our title to the heavenly glory.

When I have, first, given you the reasons of the prohibition—"Rejoice not in this," and then of the command—"But ra-

ther rejoice," &c. you may, by fuller satisfaction about the sense and truth of the proposition, be better prepared for the further application.

I. "Rejoice not," though the devils themselves were subject to you, further than as this refers to heaven; 1. Because all these common mercies may possibly consist with the present misery of the persons that receive them. A man may be the slave of the devil, as to his soul, when he is casting him out of another man's body. He may be conquered by his own concupiscence, that hath triumphed over many an enemy. These times have showed it, to our grief, that heresy, and pride, and ambition, and self-conceit, may conquer those that have been famous for their conquests. He may be a slave to himself that is the master of another.

And what I say of the instance in my text, you may, upon a parity or superiority of reason, all along give me leave to apply to the great occasion of the day, it being a matter of much greater glory to conquer infernal powers than mortal enemies, and to have the devils subject to us than men. To be such a conqueror of men or devils is no sure proof of the pardon of sin, the favour of God, and saving of your souls. Alas! how many, called valiant, are the basest cowards in the warfare that their everlasting life dependeth on? How many that are renowned for their victories by men, are wretches despised and abhorred by the Lord? What Christian so poor and despicable in the world that would change his state with a Catiline or Sejanus, yea, with a Cæsar or Alexander, if he might? Could you see the inside of a glittering gallant, or an adored prince, that is a stranger to the life of faith, what a sad disparity would you see? The vermin of the most filthy lusts continually crawling in the soul, while the body is set out by the most exquisite ornaments that pride can invent, and their purses can procure, for the increasing of their esteem in the eyes of such as judge of souls by the colour and cover of the bodies. To see the same man sumptuously feasted, attended, honoured, magnified by men, and at the same time dead in sin, unacquainted with the life and comforts of believers, and under the curse and condemnation of the law of God, would tell you that such a wretch is far from the state in which a reasonable man is allowed to rejoice. There are not more naked leprous souls in the world, than some that are covered with a silken, laced, painted case: nor any more poor and sordid, than such as

abound with earthly riches. And for such a one to rejoice is as unseemly as for a man to glory that his gangrened foot hath a handsome shoe ; or that his diseased, pained flesh doth suffer in the fashion ; or that his wounds and ulcers are searched with a silver instrument. God seeth the rottenness and filth that is within these painted sepulchres, and therefore judgeth not of them as the ignorant spectator, that seeth no further than the smoothed, polished, gilded outside. And therefore we find his language of such to differ so much from the language of the world. He calls those poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and foolish, and mad, and dead, and cursed, that perhaps hear nothing lower from the world than honourable, worshipful, rich, and wise ; and men are admiring them, while God is loathing them : and men are applauding them, while God condemneth them. And hence it is that the servants of the Lord do lament the case of those that worldlings count most happy. What Paul speaks of those “ whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, and who mind earthly things,” he doth it weeping ; (Phil. iii. 18, 19 ;) when a frantic sensualist would have derided his compassionate tears, and bid him keep them for himself.

2. Rejoice not in these outward common things comparatively, or for themselves, because they are not only consistent with most deplorable misery, but also are the strong and ordinary means of making men miserable, and fixing them in it, and increasing it. Many that have seemed humble, fruitful, flourishing, and steadfast, while they dwelt in the vallies of a mean, a low, afflicted state, have proved sun-burnt, weather-beaten sinners, apostates, proud, vain glorious and barren, when they have removed their habitations to the mountains of prosperity. Alas ! we find it hard enough to be serious, faithful Christians, under the less and ordinary temptations of a poor, or mean, or suffering condition. And I should rejoice if I were but to pass to heaven as a camel must pass through a needle’s eye. We have difficulties enough already, unless our wisdom, strength, and courage, were greater to encounter them ; and shall we rejoice if these difficulties be increased to impossibilities, (as with men,) leaving us no hope but that human impossibilities are conquerable by Divine Omnipotency. (Luke xviii. 27.) Is it not hard enough to have a lowly mind in a low condition ; but much more in a high. To despise the world when the world despiseth us. To walk in heaven when faith is not interrupted by the noise or shows of the distracted actors

of these bedlam tragedies. And to converse with our everlasting company, when we are freest from these crowds and tumults. And shall we rejoice that we, who already stumble at straw, have rocks of offence and mountains of difficulty cast before us? How few are advanced to higher measures of faith and holiness by their advancements in the world? For the most part, if they seemed to have something of plain honesty and fidelity before, when they come to be advanced, it is drowned in carnal policies, self-love, and hypocritical dissimulation. And if they seemed before to be humble and heavenly, and to live to God, and to his interest and service, how strangely doth prosperity and dignity transform them, and make them forget their former apprehensions, their convictions, purposes, and vows, yea, their God, their happiness, and themselves. And should we not be very cautelous how we rejoice in an air that few men have their health in? and in a diet how sweet soever, that corrupts and kills the most that use it? in the tables that prove snares, and the sumptuous houses that are traps to the inhabitants?

3. Rejoice not in these common things, for they are but such as are often made the devil's tools to do his work by, and are used against the Lord that gave them, to the hinderance of the gospel, and injury of the church of Christ. While men are low, and live by faith, they do good with the little which they have; and have the blessing of the will, (when they are unable for the deed,) and of hearts disposed to do good if they had opportunity; when usually those that are lifted up, having more of power, and less of will, do less when they might and should do more; and use their talents to aggravate their sin and condemnation; to further piety, or charity, they have power without will; but to hinder it, they have both power and will. And while the poor of the world, that are rich only in faith, would help on the work of God, and cannot, (by the great assistances which the great might give,) and the rich and honourable can and will not, but can and will promote the interest of the flesh, you may easily see the case of the church, how sure it is to know the adversity, and how much of our expectation must be from God, and how little from any of the sons of men. Is it as common for one that is very rich to part with all to follow Christ for the hopes of heaven, as it is for one that hath not much in the world, to part with? Is it as common for one that hath many thousands a year, to cast all his substance into the treasury, as for a widow to do it that hath but two mites? (Luke xxi. 2.)

4. O how much easier were it like to go with the church of God if greatness and ungodliness were not so commonly conjunct ! But usually, as riches, and dignities, and honours, do much increase their carnal interest, so do they increase their carnal mindedness, and their engagements against that life of faith and holiness which is contrary to their interests ; so that none are such malignant adversaries to godliness, and none have such advantage to execute their malice. Seeing, then, that all such honours and advancements are made by corruption too ordinary instruments of the vilest works of serving Satan, and opposing Christ, and oppressing piety, honesty, and innocence, rejoice not in them as for themselves, nor any way but in subservience to your heavenly rejoicings.

5. And it should much abate our carnal joy to consider that all these things are such as may end in misery, and leave the owner in everlasting wo. He that is feasting in purple and fine linen to-day, may be to-morrow in remediless torments, and want a drop of water to cool his tongue. (Luke xvi.) He that is to-day triumphing over mortal enemies, may to-morrow be led in triumph to hell fire, and lie in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day. He that is now prophesying in the name of Christ, and casting out devils, and doing many great and wonderful works, may shortly be condemned at his bar with a “depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you.” (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) And who would be merry at a feast that he must cast up again, in griping pain, or mortal sickness ? You see now where the great ones of the world do take their places, and how they are admired and honoured by men ; but you see not where the tide will leave them, and how they shall be used by infernal spirits, if they have not a better preventive and security than all the renown and dignities of the world. Be cautelous, therefore, in your rejoicing for that which may end in everlasting sorrows.

Yea, more than so, these outward honours and successes may plunge men deeper in perdition than ever they had been without them. And thousands shall wish that they had never known them ; and that they had rather been the lowest and obscurest persons, than by the temptations of prosperity to have been led into that misery. And should you not be very cautelous in your rejoicing in that which you may possibly wish you had never known ? You see then the reasons for the prohibition, “Rejoice not.”

II. But, on the contrary, that the precept “Rejoice that your

names are written in heaven," is backed with such reasons from the nature of the thing, as should much excite us to the practice, is a truth so manifest, that a tedious demonstration of it might seem at best unnecessary, and so an error, in these straits of time. 1. What should be rejoiced in, if not the Lord of life himself, who is the everlasting joy and glory of the saints? If felicity itself cannot make us happy, and life itself is insufficient to quicken us, and the sun itself cannot illuminate us, it is in vain to expect this light, this life, this happiness and joy from any other. From others we may have joy derivatively at the second hand, but only from God as the original and first cause. Other things may be means of the conveyance, but God is the matter of our joy. A creature may be his medicine, but he is our life and health itself, Comfort may be offered by others, but it is he that gives it. Others may direct us to it, but he effecteth it. If God be not to be rejoiced in, the affection of joy is made in vain; for he is goodness itself, and there is nothing lovely or delectable but what is in him. And what is heaven but the fruition of God?

2. It is congruous that we now rejoice in that which we must everlastingly rejoice in. Heaven is the state of everlasting joy, and, therefore, the foresight of it by faith is the only way to rational, solid comfort here. If you knew the place in which you should live but an hundred years in earthly pleasures, or the friend in whom you should as long have sweet delight, the foreknowledge of it would make that place and friend more delightful to you than any other. Mutable joys are the shame of man, and show his levity, or his folly in choosing these things to comfort him that are insufficient to perform it. But if your heavenly interest be the matter of your joy, you may rejoice to-morrow as well as to-day, and the next day as well as to-morrow, and the next year as well as this. If prosperity be your joy, your joy must be short, for your worldly prosperity will be so. If victory and dignity, and overtopping others, be your joy, it will be short; for death is ready to leave the conqueror, the honourable, the prince, with the conquered, and the meanest subject. If the solemnity and feasting of such a day as this should be the greatest matter of your joy, the day will have a night, and the feast an end, and so will your joy. But if heaven be the matter of your joy, you may go on in your rejoicing, and every day may be your festival: for God is the same both yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. You only have

the day that hath no night, and the feast that hath no end, or intermission, unless as it is caused by your errors and misapprehensions. There can nothing fall out of so hurtful a nature as to turn your feast into gall and wormwood, for God will be still God, and Christ still your head, and heaven will be heaven, and nothing is of any considerable moment to put into the scales against your happiness. If once you have a God, a Christ, a heaven to rejoice in, you may rationally indulge a constant joy, and may rationally rejoice in poverty, reproach, contempt, and calumny, in imprisonment, banishment, sickness, or in death, as in a prosperous state : and you transgress the laws of reason if you do not.

3. Rejoice if your names are written in heaven ; for this is a divine, a pure, a profitable, and a warrantable joy. When God and his ministers rebuke your mirth, it is not this holy mirth that they rebuke, but your dreaming mirth, or waking folly. As we beat down your presumption, but to set up your faith ; and beat down men's deceitful hopes, to prepare them for the hopes that will not fail them, and not to bring them to despair ; so do we call you from your frothy, foolish, childish mirth, that we may lead you to the highest joys. Here is joy that you need not be ashamed of ; of which you can scarcely take too much ; of which you need not to repent. Be as joyful and merry as you will, if this may but be the matter of your joy. The more you are thus joyful, the more acceptable to God. It is Satan, and not God, that is the enemy of this joy ; that pleads against it, and fills a Christian's mind with groundless scruples, and doubts, and objections against it. O that our souls and our assemblies did more abound with this holy joy ! And O that Christians understood the excellency and usefulness of it, and would set themselves more constantly to the promoting and maintaining of it in themselves ! Whoever of you that is most joyful in the Lord, I dare persuade you to be more joyful yet ; and so far should you be from checking yourselves for this holy joy, that the rest of your duties should intend it, and you should make it your work by the help of all God's ordinances and mercies to increase it. He is the best Christian that hath most love, and joy, and gratitude ; and he that is best at this, is like to be best in the performance of his other duties, and in the conquest of remaining sins. But more of this in the application.

And now I am approaching to a closer application, I hope I may suppose that I have removed the objection that met me in

the beginning, and that by this time you see that I am not unseasonably suppressing your warrantable joy ; but, 1. Preventing that which is unwarrantable ; and, 2. Showing you the higher joys, which must animate these, or they will be but dead, corrupted things ; it is only the regulation and the exaltation of your joys that I am endeavouring : and, for the first, my text affordeth me so full instruction, that you may see this observation meeting you in the first perusal of the words.

That when the Lord hath vouchsafed us matter of rejoicing in his wonders of mercy, and our great successes, the best of us are too prone to take up a selfish, carnal joy, and have need of Christ's prohibition or caution, "rejoice not in this."

The soul is active, and will be doing ; and there is nothing that it is more naturally inclined to than delight. Something or other, which may be suitable to it, and sufficient to answer its desires, it fain would be rejoicing in. And the spiritual part of all our mercies is pure and refined, and too subtle for the discerning of our carnal minds, and, therefore, is invisible to the dark, ungodly world ; and, also, it is contrary to the interest of the flesh, and to the present bent of man's concupiscence : and therefore it is that spiritual mercies are not perceived, nor relished by the flesh ; yea, that they are refused, as food by a sick stomach, with enmity and loathing, as if they were judgments or plagues, and not mercies ; and hence it is that a carnal mind doth as unwillingly accept of any mercies of this sort, as if it were some heavy service that made God almost beholden to him to accept them. But the objects of sense, the matters of commodity, or honour, or sensual pleasure, are such as the worst of men are more eager after than any other ; they are things that flesh itself doth savour, and can judge of, and is naturally, now, too much in love with. And, therefore, there being too much of this concupiscence yet within us, the best have need, as to be excited to the spiritual part of their rejoicing, so to be warned and called off from the carnal part. Our successes, and our other common mercies, have all of them both a carnal and a spiritual part ; somewhat that is suited to our bodies, and somewhat to our souls. And as we are all too prone to be sensible and regardful of our bodily affairs and interests, and too insensible and neglectful of the matters of our souls ; so we can easily pick out so much of providences and mercies as gratify and accomodate our flesh ; and there we would stop and know no more ; as if we had no spiritual part to

mind, nor the mercy of any spiritual part to be improved. To rejoice in mere prosperity and success may be done without grace, by pride, and sensuality, as easily as a drunkard can be merry with his cups, or any other sinner in his sin. Think it not needless, then, to hear this admonition, take heed that you rejoice not carnally in the carcass, or outside only of your mercies; as such an outside religion, consisting in the shell of duty, without God, who is the life and kernel, is not religion indeed, but an hypocritical, self-deceiving show; so you may turn a day of thanksgiving into a day of fleshly mirth, more sinful than a morris-dance or may-game, because of the aggravation of conjunct hypocrisy, if you set not a faithful guard upon your hearts.

For the rectifying, therefore, and elevating of your joys, I am first to tell you, that there is matter of far greater joy before you than all the successes or prosperity of the world: and if it be not, yet being freely offered you, your acceptance may quickly make it such. Eternal joy and glory is at hand, the door is open, the promise is sure, the way made plain, the helps are many, and safe, and powerful; you may have the conduct of Christ, and the company of thousands, (though the smaller number,) if you will go this way: there are passengers every day going on, and entering in; many that were here the last year, are this year in heaven; yea, many that were yesterday on earth, are in heaven to day. It is another kind of assembly and solemnity than this that they are now beholding, and you may behold. One strain of that celestial melody doth afford more ravishing sweetness and delight than all that ever earth could yield. If a day in God's courts here, be better than a thousand in common employments or delights, then, sure, a day in heaven is better than ten thousand. That is the court; and (except the church, which is a garden that hath some celestial plants, and is a seminary or nursery for heaven) this world is the dung-hill. There all is spiritual, pure, and perfect; the soul, the service, and the joy; but here they are all so mixed with flesh, and, therefore, so imperfect and impure, that we are afraid of our very comforts, and are fain, upon the review, to sorrow over many of our joys. We come now from cares and troubles to our feasts; and our wedding garments smell of the smoke; and a secret disquietness in the midst of our delights doth tell us, that the root of our troubles doth remain, and that yet we are not where we should be, and that this is not our resting place.

We lay by our cares and sorrows on these days with our old clothes, to take them up again to morrow, and alas ! they are our ordinary week-day habits : and it were well if it were only so ; but even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ; and in our sweetest joys we feel such imperfections as threateneth a relapse into our former troubles. But the face of God admitteth no such imperfections in the joy of the beholders ; there we shall have joy without either feeling or fear of sorrow ; and praises without any mixtures of complaint. Our sweetest love to the Lord of love will feel no bounds, and fear no end. O what unspeakable delights will fill that soul that now walks mournfully, and feedeth upon complaints and tears ! How the glory of God will make that face to shine for ever, that now looks too dejectedly, and is darkened with griefs, and worn with fears, and daily wears a mourning visage ! No trouble can enter into the heavenly Jerusalem : nor is there a mournful countenance in the presence of our King ! Self-troubling was the fruit of sin and weakness, of ignorance, mistakes, and passion, and, therefore, is unknown in heaven, being pardoned and laid by with our flesh among the rest of our childish weaknesses and diseases. That poor, afflicted, wounded soul, that breathes in trouble as its daily air, and thinks it is made up of grief and fear, shall be turned into love and joy, and be unspeakably higher in those heavenly delights than ever it was low in sorrow. O blessed face of the most glorious God ! O happy presence of our glorified head ! O blessed beams of the eternal love, that will continually shine upon us ! O blessed work ! to behold, to love, to delight, and praise ! O blessed company of holy angels, and perfect saints, so perfectly united, so exactly suited, to concord in those felicitating works ! Where all these are what sorrow can there be ? what relics of distress, or smallest scars of our ancient wounds ! Had I but one such friend as the meanest angel in heaven to converse with, how easily could I spare the courts of princes, the popular concourse, the learned academies, and all that the world accounteth pleasure, to live in the sweet and secret converse of such a friend ! How delightfully should I hear him discourse of the ravishing love of God, of the glory of his face, the person of our Redeemer, the continued union of the glorified human nature with the divine, and of the head, with all the glorified members, and his influences on his imperfect ones below ! Of the dignity, quality, and work of saints and angels, and of the manner of their mutual con-

verse. How gladly would I retire from the noise of laughter, the compliments of comic gallants, the clutter and vain-glory of a distracted world, or any of the more mainly inferior delights, to walk with one such heavenly companion ! O how the beams of his illuminated intellect would promote my desired illumination ! And the flames of his love to the most glorious God would reach my heart ; what life and heavenly sweetness there would be in all his speeches ! That little of heaven that I have perceived on some of the servants of the Lord, that are conversant above in the life of faith, doth make them more amiable, and their converse much more delectable to me, than all the feasting, music, or merriments in the world. O then what a world of joy and glory will that be, where we shall not only converse with them that have seen the Lord, and are perfected in the beatifical vision and fruition, but also shall ourselves everlastingly behold him, and enjoy him in perfection ! That world all true believers see ; they see it by faith in the holy glass which the Spirit in the apostles and prophets hath set up : and they have the earnest and first-fruits of it themselves, even that Spirit by which they are sealed hereunto ; that world we are ready to take possession of ; we are almost there ; we are but taking our leave of the inhabitants and affairs of earth, and better putting on our heavenly robes, and we are presently there. A few nights more to stay on earth, a few words more to speak to the sons of men, a few more duties to perform, and a few more troublesome steps to pass, will be a small inconsiderable delay. This room will hold you now but an hour longer, and this world but a few hours more, but heaven will be the dwelling-place of saints to all eternity. These faces of flesh that we see to day, we shall see but a few times more, if any ; but the face of God we shall see for ever. That glory no dismal times shall darken, that joy no sorrow shall interrupt, no sin shall forfeit, no enemy shall endanger or take from us, no changes shall ever dispossess us of. And should not a believer then rejoice that his name is written in heaven ? and that every providence wheels him on, and whether the way be fair or foul it is thither that he is travelling ? O sirs ! if heaven be better than vanity and vexation ; if endless joy be better than the laughter of a child that ends in crying ; and if God be better than a delusory world, you have then greater matters set before you to be the matter of your joy than prosperity and success, or any thing that flesh and blood delights in.

And this being so, I am next, in faithfulness to your souls, obliged to call you to inquire, whether the rejoicing of this day, and the rejoicing of your lives, do here begin ? Is God the beginning and the end of all ? O that the Lord would awaken you to perceive, in all your mirth, how nearly it concerneth you to know first whether your names are written in heaven ; and whether your chiefest joy be fetched from thence.

Alas ! sirs, it is a most pitiful sight to see men frisk about in jollity, with the marks of death and wrath upon them ; and to see men so frantically merry in their sin, as to forget the misery that will so quickly mar their mirth ; and to see men live as quietly and pleasantly as if all were well with them, when they have taken no successful care for their precious souls, nor made any considerable sure provision for their endless life ! Poor sinner ! the Lord who sent me on this message to thee, knows that I envy thee not thy mirth or pleasure, but only would have it better for thee, or have thee set thy mind on better. But let me so far interrupt thee in thy mirth, as to ask thee whether thou art sure of heaven ? Or, at least, whether thou hast given diligence to make it sure ? (2 Peter i. 10.) If this night thy soul be called away, canst thou truly say that thou art an heir of life, and hast laid up thy treasure there beforehand ? If thou say that thou hopest well, and no man can do more, and thus dost desperately cast thy everlasting life upon a careless venture, I must tell thee first that assurance may be bad. Would God bid us rejoice that our names are written in heaven, if it were a thing that could not by any means be known ? Would he bid us give diligence to make our calling and election sure, if it were a thing that could not by any diligence be attained ? And I must add, that presumption is no sign of a safe condition. It shall not go well with you because you imagine it shall go well. A man in a dropsy or consumption will not live by saying that he hopes he shall not die. Yea, more, I must add, that a careless venturousness is a mark of misery. For a man that valueth God and his salvation, cannot put off a matter of such eternal consequence so slightly and disregardfully. And a fear and care about your salvation would be a far better sign. For the most part they are safest that fear their danger, and they are in the saddest case that are never sad at the consideration of their case. It is not your bold and confident conceits that will open heaven to you, and therefore, I beseech you, presently look out for surer grounds of peace than these.

If you say, How can it be known to me whether my name be written in heaven or not? I shall briefly, but satisfactorily, answer it.

In general, if thou know that thou art one that God hath promised heaven to, thou mayest know thy title, which is meant by the writing of thy name in heaven, and thou mayest know that this promise shall be made good.

More particularly, 1. If thou hast had such an effectual sight of the vanity of earth, and of the heavenly felicity, that heaven hath the pre-eminence in thy practical estimation and choice, and thou hast resolved that heaven or nothing shall be thy happiness, and art so far at a point with all things under the sun, as that thou art resolved to stick closer to Christ than unto them, and whatever it cost thee to take the fruition of God for ever as thy portion; if, upon consideration of the difference between heaven and earth, God and the creatures, eternity and time, thou hast heartily devoted thyself to God, and art willing to be his servant upon the terms that he inviteth thee on, thou mayest be assured that thy name is written in heaven. (Matt. vi. 19, 21, and xvi. 24—26, and xiii. 45, 46; Luke xviii. 33.)

But if earth be the place of thy highest estimation and choice, where thou placest thy chief affections, and which thou adherest to more resolutely than to God, and which thou wilt not leave whatever thou lose by it, then, as earth hath thy heart, so earth is thy treasure, and thy name is not written in heaven, but in the dust.

2. If the obtaining of heaven be the principal part of thy care and business, the principal work which thou mindest in the work, it is certain that thy name is written in heaven: (Col. iii. 1—4:) otherwise not.

3. If, finding thyself lost and filthy in thy sin, thou see the necessity and sufficiency of Christ, and, being desirous of his graco and righteousness, dost unfeignedly take him for thy Saviour and Lord, and give up thyself to be healed, and justified, and saved by him, as the only physician of souls, thou art then his member, and thy name is written in heaven. (Job. i. 12, and iii. 16, 18.)

4. If the heavenly nature be most amiable in thine eyes, and the heavenly life be it that thou most desirest; if thou hadst rather be holy than be unholy, and hadst rather perfectly obey the Lord, than live in sin, and longest to be better, and

studiest to live in obedience to the Lord, thy name is in heaven, and thither thou art passing, and it will be thy reward. But if thou love not holiness, but hadst rather be excused from it, and live in thy sins, thou art as yet no heir of heaven. (Job iii. 19 ; and xii. 26 ; Psalm i. and cxix.)

5. If thy name be written in heaven, thou hast a special love to the heirs of heaven. And the more of heaven thou findest in their hearts and lives, the more amiable they are unto thee, and the sweeter is their converse. (Job iii. 14 ; Psalm xv. 4.)

I shall name no more. These evidences are sure. By these you may know, while you sit here in these seats, yea, if you lay in the darkest dungeon, that you are the heirs of heaven, and your names are there.

But where there is no such work, no high estimation of heaven, and resolution for it, no mortification or conquest of the world, no prevalent care and diligence for heaven, no resignation of the soul to Christ, that by faith and holiness we might follow him to that glory, no love to holiness, and no delight in the heirs of heaven, such persons are yet aliens to the heavenly nature and inheritance, and cannot rejoice that their names are written in heaven.

And now I have set the glass before you, I earnestly entreat you that you will here seriously view the complexion of your souls. It more nearly concerneth you to know whether your names are written in heaven, and where it is that you must dwell for ever, than to know how to manage your trades and business, or to know whether you shall stir from this place alive, or ever see another day. O sirs, take heed of living in self-deceit till your trying and recovering time is past ! This is it that your enemy aims at ; he will do all that malice and subtlety can do to keep such matters from your sober thoughts, or to make you groundlessly presume that you are safe, or securely to cast your souls upon a desperate venture, under pretence of trusting in Christ, till he hath you where he would have you, and then he will himself take off the veil, and let you know that you had time and light to have acquainted you with your disease and misery, while you might have had a free, and sure, and full remedy. Then you shall know that it was along of your self-deceit if you would not understand and believe in time, that if you lived after the flesh, you should die, (Rom. viii. 13,) and that it is the pure in heart that shall see God. (Matt. v. 8.) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not

inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. (Ephes. v. 5, 6.) And can any thing justify the rejoicing of men in so sad a state?

Give me leave, therefore, to make a little closer application of the several parts of my text to the several sorts of persons whom they do concern. And first to all that yet are not become the heirs of heaven: Rejoice not though devils were subject to you, till your souls are subject to him that bought them. Rejoice not though you had conquered all the world, and had your wills of all your adversaries, as long as you are conquered by your fleshly lusts, and Satan leads you captive at his will. (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.) Rejoice not though you had all the riches of the earth, as long as you are void of the riches of grace, and have nothing to do with the riches of glory. Rejoice not though all men should honour you, and bow to you, and proclaim your fame, as long as you are the drudges of the devil and the flesh, and the God of heaven proclaimeth you his enemies, and resolveth on your destruction, if you do not soundly and seasonably repent. (Luke xix. 27, and xiii. 3, 5.)

Be not offended with me, that, on a day of thanksgiving, I thus far forbid you to rejoice, for it is not you that are qualified for it, or have any part or fellowship in this business, being in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of your iniquity, your hearts being not right in the sight of God. Though the invitation be general, it supposeth that you come prepared, and therefore even he that calls men to his joys, will find out him that hath not on the wedding garment, “and will bind him, and cast him into outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. xxii. 12, 13.) 1. Alas! sirs, if God would allow you to rejoice, how willingly could I allow it you. But hear whether he approve it. (Jam. v. 1, 3.) “Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming on you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it

were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.' (Luke vi. 24—26.) "Wo unto you that are rich, (if you have no better riches,) for ye have received your consolation. Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you," &c.; you may find your lesson, Joel. ii. 12, 13, "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart." You see what God calls such men to. And if he allow you not to rejoice till you are converted, if I or any man should flatter or cheat you into joy, it would be but a curse to you, and not a benefit.

2. Were your joy but reasonable, I would not discourage it. But a madman's laughter is no very lovely spectacle to yourselves. And I appeal to all the reason in the world, whether it be reasonable for a man to live in mirth that is yet unregenerate, and under the curse and wrath of God, and can never say, in the midst of his greatest pomp or pleasure, that he is sure to be an hour out of hell, and may be sure he shall be there for ever, if he die before he have a new, a holy, and a heavenly nature, though he should die with laughter in his face, or with a jest in his mouth, or in the boldest presumption that he shall be saved, yet, as sure as the word of God is true, he will find himself everlastingly undone, as soon as ever his soul is departed from his body, and he sees the things that he would not believe. Sirs, is it rational to dance in Satan's fetters, at the brink of hell, when so many hundred diseases are all ready to mar the mirth, and snatch away the guilty soul, and cast it into endless desperation? I exceedingly pity the godly in their unwarrantable, melancholy griefs; and much more an ungodly man that is bleeding under his wounds of conscience. But a man that is merry in the depth of misery, is more to be pitied than he. Methinks it is one of the most pitiful sights in all the world to see a man ruffle it out in bravery, and spend his precious time in pleasures, and melt into sensual, foolish mirth, that is a stranger to God, and within a step of endless wo! When I see their pomp, and feasting, and attendance, and hear their laughter, and insipid jests, and the fiddlers at their doors or tables, and all things carried as if they had made sure of heaven, it saddeneth my heart to think, alas! how little do these sinners know the state that they are in, the God that now beholdeth them, the change that they

are near ! How little do they think of the flames that they are hastening to, and the outcries and lamentations that will next ensue.

3. Your mirth is disingenuous and dishonest as long as you are without a title to heaven. You slight the Lord that can find such matters of rejoicing, when you have not his favour to rejoice in, and are under his displeasure. While you are refusing Christ, abusing grace, resisting the Spirit, serving the flesh, and undoing your own souls, it cannot be an honest or ingenuous thing for such as you to live in joy.

4. If your mirth were truly honourable to you, it were the more excusable. But to laugh in sin and misery, and make merry so near the endless wo, is a greater shame to your understandings, than to make sport to set your house on fire. This is the laughter of which Solomon might well say, "Thou art mad," and the mirth of which he saith, "What doth it." (Eccl. ii. 2.)

5. Would thy mirth do thee any good, we would not discourage it, yea, if it did not do thee harm. But O how many are now in sorrow by the means of their unseasonable, sinful mirth ! They are too jocund to hear the preacher, or their consciences, or to observe the checks and motions of God's Spirit, or to spend now and then an hour in retired, sober thoughts of their everlasting state. Should we but presume to call them to exercise their reason, and mind them of these most needful things, and tell them, "O poor distracted mortals, your time is given you for greater things than to fiddle, and dance, and drink, and jest, and prate, and compliment it away !" should we not be thought morose, or melancholy, or fanatics ? And should we not have some such answer as their ancestors in Sodom gave to Lot ? (Gen. xix. 9.) "Stand back. This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge : now will we deal worse with thee than with them ;" we will take a course with these controllers. Alas ! it is this foolish mirth that casteth men's reason and conscience asleep, and drowns the voice of sober words, so that God himself cannot be heard. Could we but get men to retired soberness and seriousness, we should hope that we might find a friend within them, and that we speak to men, and that reason would take part with the most reasonable motions that are made to them from the Lord.

6. Lastly. Would your groundless mirth endure, we would

not say so much against it. But, alas ! to be merry for a day, and then to lie in misery for ever, is a thing deserving no encouragement. We see it is a merry world with many that have least cause of mirth ; but how long will they continue it ? To see a man laugh, and play, and feast in a chariot, that drives on so fast to death, in a vessel that is on so swift a stream that ends in the gulf of endless horror, is a doleful sight. O how quickly will that merry countenance turn sad ! those proud looks be turned to an earthy paleness ; and those wanton eyes be mouldered to dust, and leave the empty holes to warn the next spectators to use his eyes more wisely while he hath them ? How quickly will these same sensual persons exchange their mirth for sighs, and groans, and endless torments, and fruitless lamentations, when they shall have everlasting leisure to peruse their lives, and to consider their ways, which now there is no persuading them to consider of ? Who can encourage such hurtful and unseasonable mirth as this ? “ Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God.” (Hos. ix. 1.) “ Rejoice not in a thing of nought,” (Amos vi. 13,) much less in the sufferings of your brethren ; (Obad. 12,) and, least of all, in any hurt that befalls the church. If enmity to holiness, and exalted impiety, should take occasion to triumph, we answer, as Micah, vii. 8, 9, “ Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise : when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me : I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me : he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.”

If you think I have stood too long on the first part of my text, it is not to rebuke your holy joy, but only to promote it, and repress that carnal joy which is more destructive to it than sorrow itself. As you must “ seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and then other things shall be added to you,” (Matt. vi. 33 ;) so must you rejoice first in the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness that is the way thereto, and then you may add a moderate rejoicing in the things below in a due subordination thereunto. You have the sum in the words of the Holy Ghost, “ Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord,” &c. (Jer. ix. 23, 24.)

2. My next address must be to them whose names are written in heaven, and that with a twofold exhortation.

I. "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." It is you, Christians, that joy of right belongs to. Little know the lovers of pleasure more than God that they lose a thousand fold more pleasure than they win : and that by running from a holy life for pleasure, they run from the fire into the water for heat, and from the sun into a dungeon for light. O show the unbelieving world, by your rejoicing, how they are mistaken in their choice ! Be ashamed that an empty sot, and one that must be for ever a firebrand in hell, should live a more joyful life than you ! O do not so wrong your Lord, your faith, your endless joys, as to walk in heaviness, and cast away the joy of the Lord which is your strength, and to be still complaining, when those that are prepared for the slaughter are as frolic as if the bitterness of death were past. It is well that you have so much life as to feel your sicknesses ; but it is not well, that because you are yet diseased, the life of grace and of glory should be so ineffectual to your comfort. And yet, alas ! how common is it to see the most miserable frisk and fleer, while the heirs of life are sinfully vexing themselves with the inordinate fears of death. Lift up thy head, Christian, and remember whence came thy graces, even thy least desires, and whither do they tend. Where is thy Father and thy Head, and the most dear of thy companions ? Where is it that thou must live to all eternity ? Doth it seem a companion of angels, a member of Christ, a child of God, an heir of heaven, to be grieved at every petty cross, and to lay by all the sense of his felicity, because some trifle of the world falls cross to his desires and commodity ? Is it seemly for one that must be everlastingly as full of joy as the sun is full of light, to live in such a self-troubling, drooping state, as to disgrace religion, and frighten away the ungodly from the doors of grace, that, by your joyful lives, might be provoked to enter ? I know, as to your happiness, the matter is not comparatively great ; because if mistakes and the devil's malice should keep you sad here a hundred years, yet heaven will wipe away all tears, and those joys will be long enough when they come ; and as the joy of the ungodly, so the sorrows of the humble, upright soul will be but for a moment ; and though you weep and lament when the world rejoiceth, as their joy shall be turned into sorrow, so your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy shall no man take from you. But, in the mean time, is it

not shame and pity that you should live so unanswerable to the mercies of the Lord? that you should sinfully grieve the comforting Spirit by the wilful grieving of yourselves, and that you should peevishly cast away your precious mercies, when you so much need them, by reason of the troubles of a vexatious world, which you cannot avoid? That you, even you, that are saved by the Lord, should still be questioning it, or unthankfully denying his great salvation, and so much hinder the salvation of others? For the Lord's sake, Christians, and for your soul's sake, and in pity to the ungodly, yield not to the tempter, that would trouble you when he cannot damn you? Is God your Father, and Christ your Saviour, and the Spirit your Sanctifier, and heaven your home? And will you make all, for the present, as nothing to you, by a causeless, obstinate denial? If you are in doubt, let not mere passionate fears be heard; and let not the devil, the enemy of your peace, be heard: but peruse your evidences, and still remember, as the sum of all, that the will is the man, and what you would be that you are before the Lord. If you cannot see the sincerity of your hearts, go to your faithful, able guides, and open the case to them, and let not passion prevail against the Scripture and reason which they bring. Yea, if in your trouble you cannot by all their helps perceive the uprightness of your hearts, I must tell you, you may stay yourselves much upon their judgment of your state. Though it cannot give you full assurance, it may justly help to silence much of your self-accusations, and give you the comfort of probability. If a physician that feels not what you feel, shall yet, upon your speeches and other evidences, tell you that he is confident your disease is not mortal, nor containeth any cause of fear, you may rationally be much encouraged by his judgment, though it give you no certainty of life. As wicked men through contempt, so many godly people through melancholy, do lose much of the fruit of the office of the ministry, which lieth much in this assisting men to judge of the life or death of their souls. 'Alas!' say they, 'he feels not what I feel: he used to judge charitably, and he knoweth not me so well as I know myself.' But when you have told him faithfully, as you do your physician, what it is that you know by yourself, he is able to pass a far sounder judgment of your life or death than yourselves can do, for all your feeling: for he knows better what those symptoms signify, and what is used to be the issue of such a case as yours. Be not then so proud or wilful as to re-

fuse the judgment of your faithful pastors, about the state of your souls, in a confidence on your own.

And look not for more, as necessary to your comforts, than God hath made necessary. Is it nothing to have a title to eternal life, unless you be also as holy as you desire? Yea, is it nothing to have a desire to be more holy? Will you have no comfort, as long as you have distractions, or dulness, or such like imperfection in duty; and till you have no disease of soul to trouble you, that is, till you have laid by flesh, and arrived at your perfect joy? Dare not to disobey the voice of God: "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous; and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." (Psalm xxxii. 11.) "Rejoice evermore." (1 Thess. v. 16.) Let it be something that heaven cannot weigh down that shall suppress thy joy. Art thou in poverty, and is not heaven sufficient riches? Art thou in disgrace, and shalt thou not have honour enough in heaven? Art thou in danger from the injustice or the wrath of man, and is he not Almighty that hath undertaken to justify thee? (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) Dost thou languish under pining sicknesses, and is there not everlasting health in heaven? Art thou weak in knowledge, in memory, in grace, in duty; troubled with uncommanded thoughts and passions; and was it not so on earth with all who are now in heaven? O Christians! make conscience of obeying this command; "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Did you but know how God approveth such rejoicing, and how much it pleaseth him above your pining sorrows; and how it strengtheneth the soul, and sweeteneth duty, and easeth suffering, and honoureth religion, and encourageth others, and how suitable it is to gospel grace, and to your high relations and ends, and how much better it serves to subdue the very sins that trouble you, than your fruitless, self-weakening complainings do. I say, did you well consider all these things, it would sure revive your drooping spirits.

And do not say now, 'I would rejoice if I were sure that my name were written in heaven; but I am not sure.' For, 1. Who is it long of that you are not sure? You may be sure that he that valueth and seeketh heaven as better than earth, and that loveth the holy way to heaven, and the most heavenly people, is indeed an heir of heaven; and you may be sure, if you will, that this is your own case: and yet you say you are not sure that your names are written in heaven. If God give you his grace, and

you deny it, will you therefore deny your right to glory, and make one sin the excuse for another?

2. And if you are not sure, is it nothing to have your probabilities, and hopes, and the judgment of your able, faithful pastors, that your souls are in a safe condition? We dare not say so to the careless world, nor to the most of men, as we do to you.

Especially take heed lest melancholy habituate you to fears and griefs; and then religion must bear the blame, and you undergo a calamitous life, though you are the heirs of heaven. To this end, 1. Use not musing, serious thoughts beyond the strength of your brain and intellect. 2. Place not too much of your religion in the perusals and study of your hearts; but (for such as are inclined to melancholy) it is the fruitfulest way to be much in expending duties abroad, and labouring to do good to others. Such duties have less of self, and have much of God, and divert the troubling, melancholy thoughts, and bring in more comfort by way of reward, than is usually got by more direct inquiring after comfort. 3. Use not too much solitariness and retiredness: man is a sociable creature; and as his duty lieth much with others, so his comfort lieth in the same way as his duty. 4. Take heed of worldly sorrows, and therefore of overvaluing worldly things. 5. Take heed of idleness, or of thinking that the duties of holiness are all that you have to mind; but make conscience of being diligent in a particular calling, which diverts the hurtful, troubling thoughts, and is pleasing unto God. 6. Take not every sickness of your souls for death, but rejoice in that life which enableth you to be troubled at your diseases. Keep under melancholy by these means, (and the advice of the physician,) and you will escape a very great hinderance to this high and holy duty of heavenly rejoicing.

II. But you think, perhaps, that I have all this while forgotten the duty proper to the day: No; but I was not fit to speak for it, nor you fit to hear and practise it, till the impediment of carnal rejoicing was removed, and till we had begun with heavenly joy. It is heaven that must animate all our comforts. They are so far sweet as heaven is in them, and no further. Now, therefore, if you first rejoice for your heavenly interest, I dare safely then persuade you to rejoice in the mercies which we are to be thankful for this day. And though some of them are but yet in the birth, if not in the womb, and we are yet uncertain

what they will prove, that will not excuse us for any unthankfulness for the first conception or infancy of our mercies. And though Satan seek to get advantage by them, that will not excuse us for our overlooking the mercy in itself. And though there are yet abundance of fears and troubles on the hearts of many of Christ's servants through the land, we cannot by any such accidents be excused from the thankful observation of the workings of the Lord. All mercies on earth, even spiritual mercies, have their mixtures of trouble, and their imperfections; but must not therefore be denied or extenuated. And though many that are dear to us, smarting by the change, will be offended and grieved at our most moderate thanksgiving, we must not therefore offend the Lord by our disregardfulness of his works.

There are these things to be commemorated by us this day, which I dare not overlook. 1. That God hath so honoured his justice and impartiality, as to show how he hateth sin in whomsoever. And indeed the justice of God itself would seem more amiable to us, were we not so selfish as to think hardly of all that is hurtful unto us. Justice demonstrateth the holiness of God, and all the appearances of his holiness are lovely in themselves.

2. That the holy God hath disowned heresy and divisions on the one side, as well as impiety and profaneness on the other; and that his wisdom thought meet to acquaint us experimentally with the hurtfulness of both, and our danger of both, as he did in former ages of the church. We first found the serpentine malice of the ungodly, and God delivered us when they would have swallowed us up. But while we only heard and read of heresy and schism, and that too often abusively applied to many of the most peaceable servants of the Lord, we understood not the mischief of those evils, but were ready to take the very names to be but the reproaches of piety itself. But God saw meet to let out a flood of this sort of calamities, and to suffer heresy to disgrace itself by its unrighteous fruits, that by those fruits we might the better know it. We never knew before how much we are beholden to him for saving us from this sort of evils; and should never have sufficiently hated them, if we had not smarted by them.

3. It is a mercy to be thankful for, that thus the church is notably fortified against ever relapsing into heresy or schism for the time to come.

4. And that the frailties of men professing godliness having

so lamentably appeared, they are taught to take heed of spiritual pride, and to know and distrust themselves, and not to be high-minded, but to fear.

5. It is a very great mercy, for which I must profess I was thankful from the first appearance of it,* that so many that I hope are dear to God, have the advantage of his frowns to further their conviction, and repentance, and salvation. As prosperity was the temptation by which ambition got advantage, and Providence misunderstood was pleaded against the holy rule, what a mercy it is that Providence also should undeceive them, and vindicate itself, and teach men hereafter by the example of this age to stay till the end before they take the sense of Providence, or rather to adhere to the holy word because the longest liver shall be too short-lived to see the end, so far as to furnish him for such an interpretation. And therefore that word that is the glass in which we can foresee the end must be our guide. I had rather have my friend poor and penitent, than wealthy and impenitent; and rather in a prison, than in the chains of pride. And am glad that God hath taken away the snare that brought so many souls to so sad a pass; and hath undeceived them in part, that had carnal thoughts of the happiness of saints, and looked for temporal reign and dignity; forgetting that rich men must pass through a needle's eye to heaven, and that lowliness, meekness, humility, patience, forbearing, forgiving, self-denial, contempt of this world, and living all upon things unseen, is the life that Christ by his doctrine and example taught us, and how ill prosperity befriendeth these. I am in far more hope to see many Peters go out and weep bitterly, than I was when they prospered in a sinful way. And if yet any be so far unhumbled, as to deny it to have been a sinful way, I am in far greater hope of their conviction now than heretofore. In their greatness few durst tell them of their crimes; and those of us that did it were voluminously reproached, threatened, calumniated, and represented as turbulent to the world. (It being usual with base-spirited men to take the judgment of the greatest for their rule, and to think all suffering to be just and honourable that is inflicted by such as few dare to contradict.) But now, I hope, plain dealing may recover many that before lived under flatteries, and were above reproof

* We kept this thanksgiving voluntarily in Worcestershire, by agreement among the associated ministers, as we do here this day. See the agreement published by *The Weekly Mercury*.

I must profess that my hopes of the saving of many that are dear to me, by the furtherance of this providence, is matter of so much thankfulness to me, that were I sure to suffer with them I would yet give thanks.

6. It is matter of thanksgiving to me that God hath so far owned an unanimous, painful, faithful ministry, (for all their many sad infirmities,) as first to break the profane opposers of them, and then to scatter the adversaries on the other side. Ever since I heard it so familiar among them to call Christ's faithful servants by so many reproachful names, as priests, (in scorn,) presbyters, drivins, jack presbyters, black-coats, pulpiteers, &c., and their friends priest-ridden; to suffer quakers openly in the streets to revile them as deceivers, dogs, wolves, hirelings, false prophets, liars, and all the names that hell could teach them, I waited in fear for the judgments of the Lord; which he hath executed in our sight, and caused us to know, that his delays are no desertions of his servants, nor justification of our revilers. And let it stand as a warning to you that have seen it, and you that have executed the punishments of God upon the reproachers, that you take heed of falling into the same crime, and ~~standing~~ ^{falling} on the rock on which they have been broken; but let all England hear and fear, and do no more so malignantly or presumptuously.

And O that the unworthy ministers of Christ may remember that we are not vindicated and delivered to contend, or to imitate our afflictors, in seeking greatness to ourselves, nor to live in idleness, and neglect the souls committed to our care.

7. It is very great cause of thankfulness in my eyes, that from first to last God hath been so tender of the honour of his unanimous sober people, and his cause, of the innocency and consciences of his servants; as to execute his afflictions mostly by the hands of erring men; and to keep the rest by imprisonments, seclusions, and other means, so far from all appearance of consent or irregularities: and that at last he hath put an opportunity into their hands to declare to the world their innocency in things with which they were reproached; and that while profane opposers of religion did boast and vapour, and swear and curse, and drink healths for His Majesty's restitution, it is those whom they reproached that have silently and effectually accomplished it, and that with speed, as soon as they had power.

8. It is some matter of thankfulness to me, that whereas, to

our perpetual shame we could not in so many years compose the disagreements in church affairs among us, we are not altogether without hope that agreement may be now more effectually procured ; not only because those carnal advantages that hindered it with some are taken from them, and suffering will dispose some more to peace ; but because we are persuaded the disposition, and we are sure the interest, of His Majesty standeth for our reconciliation and unity. And verily we are the most inexcusable people in the world, if our own long and sad experience do not resolve us to do the utmost in that work ourselves, which, if we are not horridly proud and wilful, is easy to accomplish.

9. And it is matter of thanksgiving that God hath been all along so wonderfully seen in the work ; which makes us hope that the issue will yet be for our good. The first sparks that set fire on the last foundation are yet much unknown, but were so little as makes it the more strange. The wonderful whirlwind that suddenly finished the subversion was marvellous, though sad, because of the wickedness of men. The introducing of the remnant of the members ; the stop that was given them, when they had voted in a committee a liberty in religion, that excepted not popery ; the casting them out by those that set them up ; the discoveries of the fallaciousness of some of their chiefs, who were then tempted into a compliance with the army, and were fabricating a new form of a Commonwealth ; the breaking of them and of the army, in part by the returning members ; the unexpected stop that was given first to their proceedings by His Excellency in the North ; the expeditiousness, the constancy, the unanimity and strange successfulness of that attempt, that an army who thought themselves only fit to be the nation's security for liberty and religion, and were thought necessary to be entailed upon us to that end ; that were so heightened in their own and other men's esteem, by their many and wonderful successes, should in a moment (we scarce know how) fly all into pieces as a grenado that is fired ; that Ireland at the same time should be so strangely and easily reduced, and that by sober, faithful hands, and by so few, and with such speed ; that this famous city should be so unanimously excited to concur so eminently, and contribute very much to the success ; that His Excellency should conquer without any blows ; and that all be despatched that since is done with no considerable resistance ; all this, and much more, do make us

wonder at the hand of God. And seldom is there so wonderful an appearance of the Lord, but it holds forth matter that is amiable as well as admirable to his church.

Lastly. That all this is done with little or no effusion at all of blood, when so much blood was shed in the foregoing changes, advanceth the wonder to a greater height : and I hope His Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament will take notice how God hath gone before them in a tender and unbloody change, and will not hearken to them that protest against revenge, while they would use it under the name of justice. When the wheel of Providence turneth so fast, if all that have the advantage of executing their wills under the name of justice should take their advantage, you know what names and sufferings multitudes of the most useful members in such nations, in the several vicissitudes, must incur to the detriment of the commonwealth and governors.

III. You see what cause we have of thankfulness ; but I must tell you that these, as all inferior mercies, are imperfect things, and being but means to greater matters, the heavenly interest first treated on, they are no further significant or valuable than they have some tendency to their end : and I must further tell you, that it is much committed into the hands of man, under God, whether such beginnings shall have a happy or unhappy end. If Christ become to many a stumbling-stone, and be set for the fall of many in Israel, (Luke ii. 34,) and if the gospel itself prove the savour of death to some, no wonder if it be yet possible and too easy for a sinful land to turn these fore-mentioned mercies and successes into most heavy judgments, and to rob themselves of all the honour and the benefit. And therefore, above all, for the Lord's sake, and for a poor, tired, yet hoping nation's sake, and for the sake of the cause of Christ through the world, I beseech you all, from the highest to the lowest, that you will be awakened to an holy vigilancy, and look about you in your several places, lest the enemy of Christ and you should play his aftergame more successfully than now you can foresee : and lest the return of a sinful nation to their vomit should make the end yet worse than the beginning. It is not enough to have begun ; the fruit of all is yet behind. I must here deal plainly with you, however it be taken, lest I be charged with unfaithfulness at the dreadful tribunal, to which both you and I are hastening. If these beginnings, through your neglects, or any others that have been the instruments,

should now be turned to the reviving and strengthening of profaneness, and malignity against the holy ways of God; to the introduction of mere formality in religion; to the casting out, or weakening the hands of the faithful ministers in the land; to the destruction of order and discipline in the churches; to the suppression of orderly and edifying meetings for mutual assistance in the matters of salvation; or to the cherishing of ignorance or popery in the people, it will blast the glory of all that you have done, and turn the mercy into gall. Believe it, the interest of Christ and holiness will be found at last the surest ground for any prince to build his interest upon; and the owning of corrupt and contrary interests that engage men in quarrels with the interest of Christ, is it that hath undone so many princes and states already, that it should make the greatest learn at last, to account it their highest honour to be the servants of the King of Saints, and to devote their power to the accomplishment of his will. I need not tell you that it is the sober, godly, conscionable sort of men that know what they do, and why, that will be the honour of their governors, and the most useful of their subjects, and not the barbarous, malignant rabble, that understand not what belongs to the pleasing of God, the happiness of themselves, the good of the Commonwealth, or the honour of their king. And do you not think that remissness, to say no worse, of magistrates, who should restrain the insolencies of such, is not a great dishonour to our nation, and a great temptation to many in the country, that stand at a distance from the fountain of affairs, to continue their fears lest we have changed for the worst? Put yourselves in their cases, and tell me whether you could, with equal cheerfulness, keep this day, if you were used, as many able, faithful ministers and people are in the cities and countries of the land, who have their persons assaulted, their windows battered, their ministrations openly reviled, and that go in danger of their lives from the brutish rabble that were formerly exasperated by the magistrates punishing them, or the minister's reproof, or crossing them in their sins. As physicians are judged of, not so much by the excellency of their remedies, as by their success, and the people think of them as they see the patients live or die, so will they do by your great performances which you mention before the Lord this day. Should they prove to the suppression of serious godliness, and the setting up of the wicked of the land, I need not tell you what a name it will leave unto

the actors to all generations. But if you vigilantly improve them, as you have given us abundant reason to expect, then the issue shall be the healing concord of the churches, the curbing of profaneness, the promoting of a plain and serious ministry, and of the diligent service of the Lord. This is it that will make your names immortal, that have been the happy instruments of so blessed a work. How joyfully, then, will the subjects commemorate the happy introduction of their sovereign! With what love and honour will they hear his name! How readily will they obey him! How heartily will they pray for him! How precious will your memory be! And this will be numbered among the wonderful deliverances of England. If godliness be persecuted, or made a common scorn in the land, the Holy God will vindicate his honour, and make their names a scorn and curse that shall procure it; but if you exalt him, he will exalt you. Protect his lambs, and he will be your Protector. He is with you while you are with him. (2 Chron. xv. 2.) "Those that honour him, he will honour; and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

WHAT LIGHT MUST SHINE
IN OUR WORKS.

WHAT LIGHT MUST SHINE IN OUR WORKS.

MATTHEW v. 16.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

THE work designed for this time is to resolve this practical case, 'What is that light which must shine before men in the works of Christ's disciples for the glorifying of God?'

But the explication of the text is therein included.

The Son of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, who "giveth light to every one that cometh into the world," or, coming into the world, giveth light to all, from his fulness hath bespangled the inferior heavens, his church, with many refulgent stars, appointed freely to communicate the heavenly light which they had freely received. In his corporeal presence he prepared them; and his Spirit having moved on the darkened world, he irresistibly said, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, "Let there be light, and there was light, beginning at Jerusalem, but not fixed to any determinate place; but what he gave them necessarily and antecedently they were to exercise as free agents, by a command more resistible, which he here gives them. Having told them their office, and given them their names, ver. 14., "Ye are the lights of the world," he next tells them how they must be useful. They must be conspicuous, 1. Because the church where they are placed "is like a city on a hill which cannot be hid." 2. Because it is the end of him that lighteth them, and sets them up, not to put them under a bushel, but on a candlestick, to give light to all his house. And therefore no men's silencing or prohibitions, no difficulties or sufferings, will excuse them from their duty: lights they are, and shine they must; but lest they should think that it is preaching only which he meaneth, he here, commanding them their duty, lets them know that the splendour of Christianity is in works as well as words; and

thereby giveth us cause to think that it is all his disciples, or Christians, that he speaketh to, though first and eminently to the apostles and teachers of the world.

1. By "light" he meaneth both the illuminating knowledge, which must be uttered by words, and the splendour or glory of holiness which must be refulgent in their lives.

2. He calls it "your" light, as being their own in his graces, as the subjects, and their own in exercise, as the actors, though both under him.

3. It must "shine," that is, appear in its splendour, for the illumination and conviction of the world.

4. It must "so" shine as is fittest to attain these ends : it is not every twinkling that will answer their great obligations.

5. It must be "before men ;" that is, both those within, and especially those without the church, that are but men.

6. It must be a light shining in "good works," and their own works : for that is the grand difference between the disciples of Christ and others. He teacheth them not only to know and talk well, but to do well ; and he maketh men such as he teacheth them to be : "Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus," said Tertullian.

7. "That men may see," doth signify both the necessary refulgent quality of their works, and also the end of God and them.

8. But it is not hypocritical ostentation of what they are not, nor of what they are and have, as for their own glory, to be honoured and praised of men, but for the glorifying of God.

Who is called "their Father," to show their obligation to him, and to encourage them by the honour and comfort of their relation, and to show why their works will tend to the glorifying of God, even because they are so nearly related to him.

And he is said to be "in heaven," because there he appeareth operatively in his glory to the beautifying [beatifying] of holy spirits. As the soul is said to be in the head, and we look a man in the face when we talk to him, as if there principally we saw the man ; because it is in the head that it operateth by reason. So much of the meaning of the words.

Many doctrines the text affordeth us : as,

1. Christ's disciples are the lights of the world, both in the splendour of wisdom and holiness.

2. Their most eminent and convincing splendour is in their good works.

3. Their light and good works are their own, though by the grace of Christ ; and it is no injury to Christ, or his righteousness, or grace, to say, that they are their own.

4. The splendour of Christians in their good works must be such as may be seen of men.

5. The glorifying of God must be the end of our good works, and of their appearance unto men.

6. As bad as corrupted nature is, there is yet something in mankind which tendeth to the approving of the good works of Christians, and to their glorifying God thereupon.

7. God is glorified even by common men, when they approve of the glory of holiness in believers ; it is not only by saints that God is glorified.

8. As contrary as holiness is to corrupted nature, there is such resplendent goodness in true Christians' works, which common men may glorify God for : and so somewhat in them, and in Christianity, which hath such agreeableness as may tend to further good.

9. The excellency and splendour of the good works of Christians, especially teachers, is a grand means, ordained by God himself for the conviction of the world, and the glorifying of God.

But the resolving the question, What the splendour of these works must be, is my present undertaken task.

God is not glorified by our adding to him, but by our receiving from him ; not by our making him greater, or better, or happier than he is, but by owning him, loving him, and declaring him as he is, that we and others may thereby be wise, and good, and happy.

He is his own glory, and ours ; and by his own light only we must know both him and all things. We are not called to bring our candle to show the world that there is a sun, but to persuade them into its light, to open the windows and curtains, to disperse the clouds, and to open the eyes of blinded sinners.

I. The way of doing this, and glorifying God, is in the order following.

1. The first thing that our works must show is their own goodness ; they can never prove the cause good until it is clear that they are good themselves ; therefore, doubtless, Christ here intendeth that we must abound especially in those good works which the world is capable of knowing to be good, and not only in those which none but Christians themselves approve. If

believers and unbelievers agreed in no common principles, we were not capable of preaching to unbelievers, nor convincing them, nor of conversing with them. There are many excellent things which nature doth approve, and which both parties are agreed to be good; by the advantage of these, as granted principles, we must convince them of the conclusions which they yet deny; and not as the scandalous Christian, so absurdly affect singularity, as to make light of all good which is taken for good by unbelievers, and to seek for eminency in nothing but what the world thinks evil. There is a glory in some good works, which all do honour, and which manifesteth itself.

2. And then the goodness of the work doth manifest the goodness of the doer. Every man's work is so far his own, that he is related to it, and by it, either as laudable, or as culpable; as it is Gal. vi. 4, 5; "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burthen." God himself will judge men according to their works; and so will men; and so must we (much) do by ourselves; for it is the rightest judging which is likest God's.

This subordinate honour God grants to his servants:

If their works were not an honour to them, as the next agents, they could be none to him in their morality, as man's acts; though they might, as acts in general, be ordered to good by his own goodness. If God's natural works of creation (sun, and moon, and earth, &c.) were not praiseworthy in themselves, God would not be praised for them as their Maker. There are works that God is said to be dishonoured by; (Rom. ii. 23, 24;) and what are they but such as are really bad, and a dishonour to the authors? It is so far from being true, that no praise, or honour, or comfort from good works, is to be given to man; that God himself is not like else to be honoured by them as morally good, if the actors be not honoured by them; the world must first be convinced that Christians are far better than other men, and the righteous more excellent than his neighbour, before they will glorify God as the author of their goodness. In God's own judgment, "Well done," is the first word, and "Good and faithful servant," is the second, and "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," is the third.

Two sorts of scandalous persons rob God of his honour in his saints.

1. Those that professing Christianity live wickedly, or, at least,

no better than other men ; whose lives tell the world that Christians are but such as they.

2. Those that slander and belie true believers, and would hide their goodness, and make them odious to the world.

As for them that say only that we have no righteousness in ourselves by which we can be justified, I shall not differ with them, if they do but grant that all shall be judged according to their works ; and that he that is accused as an infidel, impenitent, an hypocrite, or an unregenerate, ungodly person, must against that accusation be justified by his own faith, repentance, sincerity, and holiness, or be unjustified for ever.

3. The next thing to the work, and the person that is hereby honoured, is the christian religion itself, with the Spirit's operations on the souls of Christians ; the outward doctrine and example of Christ, who teacheth his servants to be better than the world ; and the inward sanctification of the Spirit, which maketh them better. The air and food are commended which make men healthy, and the medicines are praised which cure the disease ; that is accounted good, as a means and cause which doth good, and which maketh men good ; if Christians were more commonly and notoriously much better than all other men, the world would believe that the gospel and the christian religion were the best.

But when scandalous Christians appear as bad, or worse than infidels, the world thinks that their religion is as bad, or worse, than theirs.

4. The next ascent of honour is to the Maker or Author of our religion ; the world will see that he is good that maketh so good a law and gospel, and that maketh all his true disciples so much to excel all other men. And here the first honour will be to the Holy Spirit, which reneweth souls, and maketh them holy ; and the next will be to the Son, our Saviour, who giveth us both the word and Spirit ; and the highest or ultimate glory will be to God the Father, who giveth us both his Son and his Spirit.

And thus honour ascendeth to the highest by these steps, and the world beginneth at that which is nearest to them, and reason will proceed by these degrees ; 1. The excellent holy lives of Christians are better than those of other men. 2. Therefore Christians are better than other men. 3. Therefore their religion is the best, or the word and work which make them such. 4. Therefore the Spirit is good which makes them good ; the Saviour is good who giveth them the word and Spirit, and God,

the Fountain of all, even the Father of mercies, is the Fountain of all good, and consequently the end of all. And thus God is known and glorified by our works.

II. The works which thus glorify him are first to be described in general, and then enumerated in special.

I. In general, 1. They must be such as make or show men to be in their places like to God; they must be such as represent the particular perfections of God, which are called his communicable attributes; and such as declare his relations to us; and such as declare his attributes, as so related, and his works.

As, 1. We must so live that men may see that indeed we take not ourselves to be our own, but God to be our absolute owner; and that it is not ourselves, but he, that must of right dispose both of us and ours, and that we willingly stand to his disposal. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) "Ye are not your own."

2. We must so live as may declare that we are not lawless; nor the mere servants of men, but the resolved subjects of God, the sovereign King of all; and that really we are ruled by his laws and will, and not by our own lusts or wills, nor by the wills of any, but as under him; and that we fear not any hurt to the flesh, or them that can but kill the body, in comparison of that one Lawgiver and Judge, who is able to save or destroy for ever; (Luke xii. 4; James iv. 12; 1 Cor. vii. 23;) and that we are moved more by his promises, than by all that mortal men can give us; and trust wholly to the heavenly reward of glory, and not to the transitory prosperity of this world, believing that God is true and just, and none of his word shall never fail. (1 Peter i. 3.) "We are begotten again unto a lively hope, through the resurrection of Christ to an inheritance incorruptible," &c.

3. We must so live as may declare that God is our grand benefactor, from whom we have all the good that ever we received, and from whom we hope for all that ever we shall possess; and that he is infinitely good, the original and end of all created good: we must live as those that believe that we are made for God, even to glorify him, and please his blessed will; not by making him beholden to us, but by a willing receiving of his mercies, and a willing improvement of them to our own felicity; and as those that believe that his love is better than life itself, and that to know him, and love him, and glorify him for ever, is the ultimate end and happiness of man. (Psalm iv. 7, 8, and lxxiii. 3, and lxxiii. 25, 26, 28; Phil. iii. 7, 8; Matt. vi. 33; 1 Peter i. 5, 6, 8, 9; 2 Cor. v. 1.)

2. And we must so live in relation to Christ, and to his Spirit,

as may declare to the world that the mercy of the Father is conveyed to us by the Son, and the grace of the Father and the Son by the Spirit; and what wonders of wisdom, goodness and power, truth and justice, holiness and mercy, are manifest in Christ, and his mediation to mankind. (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 16, 17; Phil. i. 20, 21; John xvii. 10.)

3. In some the works that glorify God must have these three parts of his likeness upon them.

1. They must be works of light, like the light which from the Father of lights doth illuminate us. Christians must be much wiser than the men of the world, in holy, though not in worldly things. (Col. i. 9, 28, and iii. 16.) Darkness is the state of Satan's kingdom, and ignorant Christians are scandalous, and a dishonour to Christ; not those that are ignorant of unnecessary, unprofitable, or unrevealed things but those that are ignorant of revealed, necessary, saving truths. (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 11, 12.)

2. They must be works of holy love to God and man, which show that God and goodness have our hearts, and that we would imitate God in doing good to all, according to our places and power. (Gal. vi. 10; Rom. xiii. 10—12.)

3. They must be works of life and power, where serious diligence expresseth zeal; and that we set ourselves no lower bounds, than with all our heart, and mind, and might. (2 Tim. i. 7; Rom. xii. 11.) Thus much for the general description of them.

II. The description of a Christian, whose works glorify God, according to scripture and experience, may be given you in the following particulars.

I. He is one that placeth his saving religion in the practical knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ the Saviour, whom he hath sent. (John xvii. 3.) He puts no limits to his endeavours after useful knowledge, but what God hath put by his word or providence; he would abound in holy wisdom, and thinks it worth his greatest diligence, and is still upon the increasing hand; he hath so much knowledge of the lesser matters of religion, as to keep him from scandalous miscarriages about them; but it is the knowledge of God, and of a crucified and glorified Christ, in which he taketh wisdom to consist. (John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 2.) This is the light in which he hath his daily conversation, the light which governeth his will and practice, which feedeth his meditations, his prayers, and his discourse; which repelleth his temptations, which maintaineth his hope, and is his daily work of recreation, his food, and feast.

For they will now perceive. 1. That his religion is not a matter of names and words, and trifling controversies, but hath the greatest and most excellent subject in the world; and as nature teacheth all to reverence God, so it will tell them that they must reverence that religion, that conversation, and that person, who is most divine, and where the most of God appeareth.

2. And they will see that his religion consisteth not in uncertainties, which no man can be sure of when he hath done his best; but in things so sure as none should doubt of; which will easily bring men over to consent, and shame or silence contradicters.

3. And then they will see that it is a religion which all sober persons are united in, and doth not lose its authority or reverence, by the divisions, wranglings, and digladiations of sects of different minds; for God is denied by no sober man, nor the essentials of christianity by any true Christian.

4. And men will see that our religion is no matter of indifferency, which one may do well enough without, but of absolute necessity to salvation, and that which man was made and redeemed for; and a religion of the greatest subject, the greatest certainty, the greatest consent, and the greatest necessity, will honour itself and its author in the world, if it be rightly represented in the lives of them that do profess it.

But when men's overdoing shall pretend that all this is too little, and shall seek to raise it, as to more perfection, by their own inventions, or uncertain opinions in doctrine, worship, church-discipline, or practice, they presently cast it as a football before the boys in the streets, and make it a matter of doubtful, endless disputations, of multiplied sects, of pernicious contentions, and cruel persecutions; and then the reverence and glory of it is gone, and every philosopher will vie with it in subtilty, and every stranger will presume to censure it, if not to blaspheme it, and deride it. And thus overdoers are the scandals of the world.

II. The Christian that will glorify God, and his profession, must be conscionable in the smallest matters, but he must ever describe and open the nature of his religion, as consisting in great and certain things, and not talk too much of smaller matters, as if it were those that men were to be saved by. Tell men of the necessity of believing, fearing, obeying, trusting and loving God, and of coming to him by Jesus Christ, the great Mediator between God and man; tell them of the intrinsic evil of

sin, and of God's justice, and of man's corruption, and of the nature and excellency of holiness, and of the necessity of being new-born of the Holy Spirit, and of mortifying the desires and deeds of the flesh ; and tell them of judgment, heaven, and hell, especially the certainty and excellency of the everlasting promised glory ; persuade them to believe all this, to think much of all this, and to be true to what they know, and to make it the work of life to be always prepared for death. Let this be your discourse with sinners, (as I told you in the first character it must be your own religion,) and then men will perceive that religion is a matter that doth indeed concern them, and that they are indeed great and necessary things in which you differ from ungodly men ; but the scandalous Christian talketh most of external church orders, and forms, and opinions, and parties, and thereby maketh the ignorant believe that the difference is but that one will sit when the other kneeleth ; and one will pray by the book, and the other without book ; and one is for this church government, and another for that ; and one for praying in white, and the other in black. And talking too much of such things as these deceiveth the hearers ; some it maketh formal hypocrites, who take up this for their religion, and the rest it hardeneth, and maketh them think that such people are only more humourous, and self-conceited, and giddy, and factious than others, but no whit better.

III. The genuine Christian hath an humble and cautelous understanding ; sensible when he knoweth most how little he knoweth, and how much he is still unacquainted with, in the great mysterious matters of God. His ignorance is his daily grief and burden, and he is still longing and looking for some clearer light. Not a new word of revelation from God, but a clearer understanding of his word. He knoweth how weak and slippery man's understanding is, and he is humbly conscious of the darkness of his own. Therefore he is not conceitedly wise, nor a boaster of his knowledge ; but saith, as Paul, (1 Cor. viii. 2,) " If any man think that he knoweth any thing (that is, is proudly conceited of his own knowledge,) he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

And hence it is that though he daily grow in the firmer apprehension of necessary truths, yet he is never confident and peremptory about uncertain, doubtful things ; and therefore he is not apt to be quarrelsome and contentious, nor yet censorious against those that differ from him in matters of no greater

moment. And hence it is that he runneth not into sects, nor burneth with the feverish dividing zeal, nor yet is scandalously mutable in his opinions ; because, as one that is conscious of his ignorance, he doth not rashly receive things which he understands not, but suspendeth his judgment till evidence make him fit to judge ; and joineth with neither of the contending parties, till he is sure to know, indeed, which of them is right : and thus he avoideth that dishonouring of religion which the scandalous Christian is wofully guilty of ; who, with an unhumbléd understanding, groweth confident upon quick and insufficient information, and judgeth before he understandeth the case, and before he hath heard or read, and considered, what on both sides may be said, and what is necessary to a true understanding. And thus, either by audacious prating of what he never understood, or reviling and censuring men wiser than himself, or by making himself a judge where he hath need to be many years a learner, or making a religion of his own mistakes, and setting up dividing sects to propagate them, or else by shameful mutability and unsettledness he becometh a scandal to harden unbelievers, and a disease to the church, and a shame to his profession ; read James iii. 15—17. Conceited wisdom kindleth a contentious zeal, and is not of God, but from beneath.

IV. The Christian who glorifieth God by his religion is one that so liveth that men may perceive that his carnal interest is not the end and ruler of his life ; but that God is his end, and to please him is his work and his reward, in which he is comforted, though the flesh and the world be never so much displeased ; and that the perfect light and love of God in the unseen glory of another life is the sanctifying sum of all his hopes, for which all the world must be forsaken. To talk much of heaven, and to be as much and eager for the world as others, is the way by which the scandalous hypocrite doth bring religion into contempt. It is no high, nor very honourable work, to talk of the vanity of the world ; but to live above it, and to be out of the power of it : nor is it any great matter to speak honourably of heaven ; but to live as believing seekers of it, and as those that have there their treasure and their hearts, (Matt. vi. 20, 21,) and are comforted more by the hopes of the life to come, than by all their possessions or pleasures in the world. If we will glorify God, our lives must persuade men that he will certainly be our everlasting portion, and the sure and plentiful rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. xi. 6.) It is

much of the use of a true Christian's life to convince unbelievers that there is a heaven for saints ; and the scandalous worldling persuadeth them that there is none. (Matt. v. 5, 11, 12 ; Phil. iii. 26, 21 ; Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.)

V. Therefore it glorifieth God and our religion when Christians live in greater joy, or at least in greater contentedness and peace than other men. When they can answer all the crosses in the world sufficiently with this, that " God is their God, and his love shall be their endless joy ;" (Psalm lxxiii. 1, and lxxxiii. 25, 26 ;) and when they can live by faith, and not by sight ; (2 Cor. v. 7 ;) and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God ; (Rom. v. 3, 5 ;) and can comfort themselves and one another with this, that they shall for ever be with the Lord ; (1 Thes. iv. 17, 18 ;) and can trust him to the death, who hath said, I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee. (Heb. xiii. 5.) If you would have other men honour your God and your religion, and desire to be such as you, you must really show them that you are on safer grounds, and in a happier state than they ; and that you will hardly do, if you be not more comfortable than they, or at least settled in more peace and contentedness of mind, as those that have a certain cure for the fears of death, and the danger that ungodly men are in of the revenging justice of the final Judge.

I confess it is possible for trembling, troubled, and distressed Christians to be saved. But O that they knew what a scandal they are to unbelievers, and what a dishonour to God, whom their lives should glorify ! What man will fall in love with terrors and unquietness of mind ? If you would glorify God by your fears and tears, they must be such as are accompanied with faith and hope ; and you must not only show men what would make you happy, if you could obtain it, but also that it is attainable. Happiness is every man's desire, and none will come to Christ unless they believe that it tendeth to their happiness ; they take up with the present pleasures of the flesh, because they have no satisfying apprehensions of any better. And if no man show the first fruits of any better here, they will hardly believe that they may have better hereafter ; it is too hard a talk to put a poor drunkard, fornicator, or a poor, covetous worldling on, to believe that a poor, complaining, comfortless Christian is happier than he ; and that so sad and unquiet a life must be preferred before all his temporal contentments and delights. You must show him better, or the signs and fruits of better,

before he will part with what he hath : you must show him the bunch of grapes, if you will have him go for the land of promise, when he is told of giants that must be overcome : and O what a blessing is reserved for every Caleb and Joshua, that encourage souls, and glorify the promise ! And how much do dejected discouragers of sinners dishonour God, and displease him ! I have known some ungodly men, when they have seen believers rejoicing in God, and triumphantly passing through sufferings in the joyful hopes of glory, to sigh and say, ‘ would I were such a one, or in his case ; ’ but I have seldom heard any say so of a person that is still sad, or crying, or troubling themselves and others with their scruples, crosses, or discontents ; unless it be in respect to their blameless living, perhaps condoling them, they may say, ‘ would I had no more sin to trouble me than you have.’ I confess that some excellent Christians do show no great mirth in the way of their conversation ; either because they are of a grave and silent temper, or taken up with severe studies and contemplations, or hindered by bodily pains or weakness. But yet their grave and sober comforts, their peace of conscience, and settled hopes, and trust in God, delivering them from the terrors of death and hell, may convince an unbeliever that this is a far better state than the mirth and laughter of fools in the house of feasting, and in the vanities of a short prosperity. The grave and solid peace and comfort of those that have made their calling and election sure is more convincing than a lighter kind of mirth. (John. xvi. 22.)

VI. The dominion of love in the hearts of Christians, appearing in all the course of their lives, doth much glorify God and their religion ; I mean a common hearty love to all men, and a special love to holy men, according to their various degrees of loveliness. Love is a thing so agreeable to right reason, and to social nature, and to the common interest of all mankind, that all men commend it ; and they that have it not for others, would have it from others : who is it that loveth not to be loved ? and who is it that loveth not the man that he is convinced loveth him, better than him that hateth him, or regardeth him not ? And do you think that the same course, which maketh men hate yourselves, is like to make them love your religion ? Love is the powerful conqueror of the world ; by it God conquereth the enmity of man, and reconcileth to himself even malignant sinners ; and by it he hath taught us to conquer all the tribulations and per-

secutions by which the world would separate us from his love ; yea, and to be more than conquerors through him that loved us, and thereby did kindle in us our reflecting love, (Rom. viii. 34—36,) and by it he hath instructed us to go on to conquer both his enemies and our own ; yea, to conquer the enmity rather than the enemy, in imitation of himself, who saveth the sinner, and kills the sin ; and this is the most noble kind of victory. Every soldier can end a fever, or other disease, by cutting a man's throat, and ending his life ; but it is the work of the physician to kill the disease, and save the man. The scandalous pastor is for curing heresy in the Roman way, by silencing sound preachers, and tormenting and burning the supposed heretics ; or, at least, to trust for the acceptance and success of his labours to the sword ; and if that which will restrain men from crossing the pastor, would restrain them from resisting the spirit of God, and constrain them to the love of holiness, it were well ; then the glory of conversion should be more ascribed to the magistrate and soldier than to the preacher. But the true pastor is armed with a special measure of life, light, and love, that he may be a meet instrument for the regenerating of souls, who by holy life, and light, and love, must be renewed to their father's image. Every thing naturally generateth its like, which hath a generative power. And it is the love of God which the preacher is to bring all men to that must be saved ; this is his office, this is his work, and this must be his study ; he doth little or nothing if he doth not this. Souls are not sanctified till they are wrought up to the love of God and holiness. And, therefore, the furniture and arms which Christ hath left us in his word are all suited to this work of love. We have the love of God himself to preach to them ; and the love of an humbled, dying, and glorified Redeemer ; and all the amiable blessings of heaven and earth to open to them ; and all the loving promises and invitations of the gospel ; and must not our hearts, our ministry, and our lives be answerable to all this ? Believe it, it must be a preacher, whose matter and manner of preaching and living doth show forth a hearty love to God, and love to godliness, and love to all his people's souls, that is the fit instrument to glorify God by convincing and converting sinners. God can work by what means he will ; by a scandalous, domineering, self-seeking preacher, but it is not his ordinary way. Foxes and wolves are not nature's instruments to generate sheep. I never knew much good done to souls by any pastors but such as

preached and lived in the power of love, working by clear convincing light, and both managed by a holy, lively seriousness. You must bring fire if you kindle fire. Trust not here to the Cartesian philosophy, that mere motion will turn another element into fire. Speak as loud as you will, and make as great a stir as you will, it will be all in vain to win men's love to God and goodness, till their hearts be touched with his love and amiableness ; which usually must be done by the instrumentality of the preacher's love. Let them hate me, so they do but fear me and obey me, is the saying of such as set up for themselves, (and but foolishly for themselves,) and, like Satan, would rule men to damnation. If love be the sum and fulfilling of the law, love must be the sum and fulfilling of our ministry. But yet by love I mean not flattery ; parents do love as necessarily as any, and yet must correct ; and God himself can love and yet correct ; yea, he chasteneth every son that he receiveth ; (Heb. xii. 6, 7 ;) and his love consisteth with paternal justice, and with hatred of sin, and plain and sharp reproof of sinners ; and so must ours ; but all as the various operations of love, as the objects vary.

And what I say of ministers, I say of every Christian in this place. Love is the great and the new commandment, that is, the last which Christ would leave, at his departure, to his disciples. O could we learn of the Lord of love, and Him, who calleth himself love itself, to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to do good to the evil, and pray for them that hurt and persecute us, we should not only prove that we are genuine Christians, the children of our heavenly father ; (Matt. v. 44, 45 ;) but should heap coals of fire on our enemies' heads and melt them into compassion and some remorse, if not into a holy love. I tell you it is the Christian who doth truly love his neighbour as himself ; who loveth the godly as his co-heirs of heaven, and loveth the ungodly with a desire to make them truly godly ; who loveth a friend as a friend, and an enemy as a man that is capable of holiness and salvation. It is he that liveth, walketh, speaketh, converseth, yea, suffereth, which is the great difficulty in love, and is, as it were, turned, by the love of God shed abroad upon his heart, into love itself ; who doth glorify God in the world, and glorify his religion, and really rebuke the blasphemer, that derideth the Spirit in believers, as if it were but a fanatical dream.

And it is he that by tyranny, cruelty, contempt of others, and

needless, proud singularities and separations, magisterially condemning and vilifying all that walk not in his fashion, and pray not in his fashion, and are not of his opinion, where it is like enough he is himself mistaken, that is the scandalous Christian, who doth as much against God, and religion, and the church, and men's souls, as he doth against love. And though it be Satan's way, as an angel of light, and his ministers way, as ministers of righteousness, to destroy Christ's interest by dividing it, and separating things that God will have conjoined, and so to pretend the love of truth, and love of order, as the love of godliness, or discipline, against the love of souls, and to use even the name of love itself against love, to justify all their cruelties, or censures, and alienations; yet God will keep up that sacred fire in the hearts of the sound Christians which shall live and conquer these temptations, and they will understand and regard the warning of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xvi. 17.) "I beseech you mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them," (in their sinful, dividing, offensive ways,) "for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus," (though they may confidently think they do,) "but their own bellies," or carnal interests, though, perhaps, they will not see it in themselves; "and by good words, and fair or flattering speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." The word is *τῶν ἀνάντων*, hominum minime malorum, no bad men, or harmless, well-meaning men; who in case it be not to mortal errors, perhaps, may be in the main sincere, and may be saved when their stubble is burnt; but whether sincere or not, they are scandals in the world, and great dishonourers of God, and serve Satan when they little think so, in all that they do contrary to that universal love, by which God must be glorified, and sinners overcome.

VII. A public mind that is set upon doing good, as the work of his life, and that with sincere and evident self-denial doth greatly glorify God in the world. As God maketh his goodness known to us by doing good, so also must his children do. Nothing is more communicative than goodness and love; nothing will more certainly make itself known whenever there is opportunity. That a worldly barren love, which doth not help, and succour, and do good, is no true Christian love, St. James hath told us fully in his detection of a dead and barren faith. No man in reason can expect that others should take him for a good man, for something that is known to no one

but himself, save only that public converse and communion must be kept up by the charitable belief of professions, till they are disproved. The tree is known by its fruits, and the fruits best by the taste, though the sight may give some lower degree of commendation. The character of Christ's purified, peculiar people, is, that they are zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.) The scandalous Christian may be zealous against others, and zealous to hurt them, to persecute them, to censure them, to disparage them, and to avoid them, but the genuine Christian is zealous in loving them, and doing them all the good he can. To do a little good upon the by, and from a full table to send an alms to Lazarus at the door, yea, to give to the needy as much as the flesh can spare, without any suffering to itself, or any abatement of its grandeur, pomp, and pleasure in the world, will prove you to be men not utterly void of all compassion, but it will never prove you to be Christians, nor better than infidels and heathens. Look not that men should think you better than your fruits do manifest you to be, nor that they take you to be good for saying that you are good, nor judge you to excel others any further than your works are better than others. And marvel not if the world ask, 'What do you more than others?' when Christ himself doth ask the same. (Matt. v. 47.) "If ye salute your brethren, and those of your own opinion and way, and if ye love them that love you, and say as ye say, do not even publicans and infidels do the same?" (Matt. v. 46.) Marvel not if men judge you according to your works, when God himself will do so, who knoweth the heart. He that is all for himself, may love himself, and think well of himself, but must not expect much love from others. Selfishness is the bile or imposthume of societies, where the blood and spirits have an inordinate afflux, till their corruption torment or gangrene the part. While men are all for themselves, and would draw all to themselves, instead of loving their neighbour as themselves, and the public good above themselves, they do but hurt and destroy themselves, for they forfeit their communion with the body, and deserve that none should care for them, who care for none but themselves. To a genuine Christian, another's good rejoiceth him as if it were his own, (and how much, then, hath such an one continually to feed his joy,) and he is careful to supply another's wants as if they were his own. But the scandalous, selfish hypocrite doth live quietly, and sleep easily, if he be but well himself,

and it go well with his party, however it go with all his neighbours, or with the church, or with the world. To himself, he is fallen, to himself he liveth, himself he loveth, himself he seeketh, and himself, that is, his temporal prosperity, he will advance and save, if he can, whatever his religion be, and yet himself he destroyeth, and will lose. It is not well considered in the world, how much of sin consisteth in the narrow contraction of men's love, and regard unto their natural selves, and how much of goodness consisteth in a community of love, and what a glory it is to the government and laws of God that he maketh it so noble and necessary a part of every man's duty, to love all men, and to do good to all, as he is able, though with a difference. God could do us all good enough by himself alone, without one another. But what a mercy is it to the world, that as many persons as there are, so many there are obliged by God to love their neighbours as themselves, and to do good to all about them? And what a mercy is it to the actor that God will thus make him the instrument and messenger of his beneficence?

Ministers and Christians all, would you be thought better than others? Are you angry with men that think otherwise of you? What good do you more than others in your places? What good do you that other men can see, and feel, and taste, and judge of? Every man loveth himself, and can feel what doeth him good in natural things; and God, by giving you food, and other mercies to your bodies, would have you therein taste his love to your souls, would use you just so for your brethren's good. Do you give them good words and counsel? It is well. But that is not it that they can yet taste and value. You must do that sort of good for them which they can know and relish; not that this will save them, or is any great matter of itself, no more than God's common bodily mercies to you, but this is the best way to get down better. And he that seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John iii. 17.) "Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 42.) That is, let not want of charity hinder thee, at any time, from giving, though want of ability may hinder thee, and prudence may restrain thee, and must guide thee. If you say, alas! we have it not to give. I answer, 1. Do what you can. 2. Show by your compassion, that you would, if you could, take care of

your poor brethren. 3. Beg of others for them, and put on those that can to do it.

Say not these carnal people value nothing but carnal things, and cannot perceive a man's love by spiritual benefits, for it is not grace, but the means and outside of things spiritual that you can give them; and for aught I see, the most of us all do very hardly believe God's own love to us, if he deny us bodily mercies. If you languish in poverty, crosses, and painful sickness anything long, your murmuring sheweth that you do not sufficiently taste God's goodness without the help of bodily sense. And can you expect that natural men believe you to be good for your bare words, when you so hardly think well of God himself, though he promise you life eternal, unless he also give you bodily supplies?

VIII. He that will glorify his religion, and God, before men, must be strictly just in all his dealings; just in governing, just in trading and bargaining, just to superiors and to inferiors, to friends and to enemies, just in performing all his promises, and in giving every man his right. He that in love must part with his own right for his neighbour's greater good, must not deprive another of his right, for charity includeth justice, as a lower virtue is included in a higher and more perfect. He must not be unjust for himself, for riches, or any worldly ends; he must not be unjust for friends or kindred; he must not be drawn to it by fear or flattery; no price must hire them to do an unrighteous deed. But above all, he must never be unjust as for religion, as if God either needed or countenanced a lie, or any iniquity. No men are more scandalous dishonourers of religion, and of God, than they that think it lawful to deceive, or lie, or be perjured, or break covenants, or be rebellious, or use any sinful means to secure or promote religion, as if God were not able to accomplish his ends by righteous means. This cometh from atheism and unbelief, when men think that God will lose his cause, unless our wits and sinful shifts preserve it, as if we, and not he, were the rulers of the world. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, (1 Cor. vi. 9,) and seldom escape the hatred or contempt of men.

IX. He that will glorify God, must know and observe the order of commands and duties, and that God will have mercy, and not sacrifice, and must prefer the end before the means as such. He must not pretend a lesser duty against a greater, nor take the lesser at that time for a duty, but for a sin, when

the greater should take place. God hath made his laws, and our duty, to be the means of our own good. It is no profaneness, but duty, to omit that which else would be a duty, when a greater is to be preferred. God calls it the sacrifice of a fool, who knoweth not that he doeth evil under the name of duty, when sacrifice is preferred before an obedient hearing of God's commands. (Eccles. v. 1—3.) It was no want of holy zeal in Christ, which made him bid the unreconciled, "Leave thy gift at the altar, and first go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 24.) Some zealous persecutors, censurers, and dividers, now, would think I speak like an ungodly person if I should say to them, 'Let your liturgy, and your prayers, and your worship stay till you have confessed and lamented your injuries to your brethren, and then come and offer your service to God, and lift up pure hands to him, without wrath and doubting.' Yet is it no more than God often calls for to the hypocritical Jews. (Isa. i. 11, &c.) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, when ye come and appear before me? Who hath required this at your hands, to tread in my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes; when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, relieve the oppressed." (Isa. lviii. 2, 3, &c.) "They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast as this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy

health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am."

It is a point that our Lord Jesus layeth a great stress upon. He purposely healeth on the Sabbath day, and tells the censorious pharisees "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath;" that is, the end, which is man's good, is to be preferred before the means; nay, it is no means, and so no duty, which is against it. He defendeth his disciples for getting themselves food as they passed in the corn-fields; and he teacheth them the lawfulness of the priest's labour on the Sabbath, and of David's eating the shew-bread; and at two several times doth tell them that God "will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" and biddeth them "go learn what that meaneth." (Matt. iv. 13, and xii. 7.)

And it is not only Pharisees, but many better men, who have need to go learn the meaning of that sentence. The meaning is this, that (*cæteris paribus*), the great duties of the law of nature, are to take place before the positive institutions. God's institutions are for man's good: whatever is a duty is also a means to the happiness of man, and pleasing to God, which is the end of all. Love to God and man are greater than all the instituted means of them as such; therefore that is no duty which is no means, or is against the instituter's end. Preaching and prayer must be omitted for some works of love and human good. Discipline is a duty when it is a means to the end for which it is ordained; but when it would hinder or destroy that end (the reputation of religion, and the glory of God's holiness, and the church's good) it is no duty, but a sin. To omit a sacrament, to break the rest of the Lord's day, to forbear the sacred assemblies, may be a duty when the good of men requireth them. Ordination is a duty when it is a means to its proper end. But if it were pleaded against those ends, and order set against the thing ordered, even the work of the ministry, the case would be altered.

When men mistake, and mistime and misplace God's institutions, to the excluding of the great moral duties, which are their end, and persuade men to that as a part of religion, which would certainly do more hurt than good, they scandalously drive men away from their religion. Thus imprudent, scandalous professors can backbite and reproach others, and make them

odious and destroy christian love, and peace, and concord, on pretence of zeal for order, government, ceremonies, forms, or for this or that mode of discipline or worship. Not having learned what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" nor, that forms and external institutions were made for man, and not man for them. And yet I know that this will not justify the familist or hypocrite, who thinks he may do any thing to save his flesh.

Do you think it is not a scandal to Turks, or other infidels, tempting them to deride or hate Christianity, to find the papists placing their merits in hurtful pilgrimages, which waste that time which should be spent, and in a multitude of unprofitable ceremonies, and in unwholesome food, and injuries to health, under the names of abstinence and mortification? By this rule they may next persuade us, that it will please God if men famish or hang themselves; and consequently if they do so by others, for we must love our neighbour but as ourselves. God himself hath made all our religion so suitable to our good, that he expecteth not that we should take any thing for our duty, but what he giveth us evidence in the thing, or security by his promise, shall be our gain. He that worketh upon self-love, and winneth man by a Saviour, and a glorious reward, and proveth the goodness of all his word and ways, as to our happiness, hath instituted none of his ordinances to our hurt. The apostles had their power only to edification, and not the destruction or hurt of souls. (2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.) "Let all things be done to edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26,) is a word of greater comprehension and use than many do conceive. When it is against edification, it is not acceptable to God. One would think Christ had broken his own law of discipline when he did familiarly eat with publicans and sinners: and yet that very act of his is one of those which he justifieth by the aforesaid rule, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." (Matt. ix. 11—13.) Learn this lesson of preferring mercy before sacrifice, if ever you will glorify God.

The right manner of worshipping God is of great moment to the honour of him and of our religion before the world: that we give no false descriptions of God, or dishonourable attributes: that we teach no dishonourable doctrine as his, especially of his own will and counsels, and of his government, laws, and judgment: that we neither take down the glory of the gospel mysteries, by reducing them to the rank of common Providence, nor yet be deceived by Satan or his ministers, as the

promoters of light and righteousness, (2 Cor. xi. 15,) to abuse and dishonour them by over-doing: that we seek not to glorify God by our lies, or by our own mistaken interpretations or inventions. God must be worshipped as a Spirit, in spirit and truth, and not with popish toys and fopperies, which make others think that our religion is but like a poppet-play and ludicrous device, to keep the people in servitude to the priests by a blind devotion. God must be worshipped rationally, and with holy wisdom, and not with childish shadows and trifles, nor with slovenly and imprudent words, which tend to breed in the hearers derision or contempt. Neither the cantings or scenical actions, or affected repetitions of the Papists, nor the rude, disorderly, incongruous expressions of unskilful men, are fit to be offered to the glorious God. Prudence, and holiness, and seriousness, and reverence, must appear in that worship which must honour God. O with what holiness should we hear from and speak to the holy, holy, holy God! who will be sanctified in all that draw near him, (Lev. x. 3,) and will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain! They that will do it acceptably must serve him with reverence and godly fear, (Heb. xii. 28,) as knowing that he is a “consuming fire;” and yet, with alacrity, love, and delight, as knowing that in his favour is life, and that he is the infinitely amiable good, the hope and only portion of believers.

XI. The humility, meekness, and patience of Christians are greatly necessary to their glorifying of God. I join all three together for brevity's sake.

1. It is a thing very amiable in the eyes of all, when men have not too high thoughts of themselves, and seek not to be overvalued by others, either as great, or wise, or good. When they seek not precedence, preferment, or honour, but take the lowest place, and envy not the precedence or honour of others, but take another's honour as their own, and take another to be fitter (*cæteris paribus*) for places of power, trust, or eminency, than themselves. When they do, according to the measure of their worth, honour all men, (1 Peter ii. 17,) “And are kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, in honour, preferring one another;” (Rom. xii. 10;) not dissemblingly and complementally saying, ‘Your servant, Sir,’ while they would fain have others below them, and to be obedient to their wills. But really to think meanly of their own worth and wisdom. (Rom. xii. 3.) “For I say, through the grace given to me, to every

man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Not thinking himself something when he is nothing;" (Gal. vi. 3;) nor to be more learned, or wise, or pious than he is. We must be, indeed, his disciples, who humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation;" (Phil. ii. 7, 8;) and wiped and washed the feet of his disciples, to teach them what to be and do to one another; who hath taught us the necessity of cross-bearing and self-denial, and to humble ourselves as little children, if ever we will enter into the kingdom of heaven; (Matt. xvi. 24, and xviii. 3, 4;) and hath decreed and foretold us that whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted; and therefore the greatness which his ministers must seek must be to be he servants of the rest. (Matt. xxiii. 11—13.) "Honour shall uphold the humble in spirit, but a man's pride shall bring him low." (Prov. xxix. 23.) "Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoils with the proud." (Prov. xvi. 19.) He that will honour his religion must "put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, (not of tongue only,) meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any." (Col. iii. 12, 13.) He must not set out himself like the richest, and desire to seem high or notable to others, nor set up himself with his superiors, nor swell or grudge, if he be not regarded or taken notice of: no, nor if he be reprov'd or dishonoured: but must learn of an humbled Christ to be meek and lowly; (Matt. xi. 29;) and must not mind or desire high things, but condescend to men of low estate, and not be wise in his own conceit. (Rom. xii. 16.) "I beseech you, therefore, that you walk worthy the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. iv. 1, 2.) "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." (Phil. ii. 3.) What man loveth not such a spirit and conversation? O that it were more common and eminent among us, and then we should find that the disaffection of the ignorant would be much abated, and that when a man's ways thus please God, his enemies will be the more at peace with him. (Prov. xvi. 7.) But when they are proud, and we are proud, and we cannot yield, nor bow, nor give place to the wrathful, but must

jostle and contend with them for our place and honour, we lose our christian honour by seeking carnal honour, and appear to be but like other men; and even the proud themselves will disdain the proud.

2. And though we may be angry and not sin, and must be plain and zealous against sin, and for God; though guilty, galled sinners be displeased by it, yet meekness must be our temperature; for a turbulent, rough, unquiet spirit, is displeasing both to God and man; such persons have seldom peace with others or themselves. "A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. (1 Pet. iii. 4.) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; they shall speed better than others, even in this world." (Matt. v. 5.) "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." Paul tells us what the good works are which we must be always ready to; "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers; but gentle, showing all meekness to all men. (Tit. iii. 1, 2.) The Scripture speaks more of this than I have leisure to recite. (See, Gal. v. 23, and vi. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 25; 1 Pet. iii. 15; Jam. iii. 13; Zeph. ii. 3; Isa. xxix. 19; Psalm cxli. 4, and lxxvi. 9, and cxlvii. 6, and xxxvii. 11.)

3. And patience both towards God and man is a necessary companion of humility and meekness. This greatly differeth from natural dulness, and an insensible temperature. When a man's soul is partly so much awed by God's authority and presence, and partly so much taken up with the great matters of his service, and partly so much contented with his favour and grace, and the hopes of glory, as to make light of all the interests of the flesh as such; and therefore to bear patiently such losses and crosses, and wants, and sufferings, as touch the flesh, as taking it for no great matter to lose all the world if we save our souls, this is true patience by which God is glorified. For by this men will see that Christians have indeed such great things in their hopes, as set them quite above the transitory things of the flesh and the world; but when they are much troubled at every cross and loss, and whine and complain as if they were undone, if they live in poverty and reproach; and are at their wit's end in every danger, and fret and storm at every ill word, or every one that wrongeth them, they are the shame of their profession, and scandals to the world. It is not a sudden anger which is the

great sin of impatience ; but an impotent disability to suffer in the flesh, in estate or name, and a repining under every want, which showeth a fleshly, worldly mind, and a want of true believing the heavenly felicity ; though I confess that pity must make some excuse for many poor women, whose natural temper maketh their passions, troubles, and fears invincible. He that said, “ In your patience possess your souls,” doth intimate, that we have lost ourselves, and the government; order, and peace of our souls, when we have lost our patience. (Luke xxi. 19; See Eccl. vii. 8 ; Jam. v. 7, 8 ; 1 Pet ii. 20 ; 1 Thes. v. 14.) “ Be patient towards all men.” (1 Tim. vi. 11 ; Col. i. 11.) Whatever zeal you seem to have in prayer, in preaching, and for purity of worship, if you can bear wants and sickness and the loss of all the world no better than others, you will appear no better in their eyes ; for “ if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.” (Prov. xx. 10.)

XII. And as a special fruit of humility, an easy and thankful bearing of reproof, and readiness to confess a fault upon due conviction, is a necessary duty to the honouring of God. It will show men that you are enemies to sin indeed, and that you are not hypocrites who weed not only their neighbours’ fields, and see the mote in another’s eye, and not the beam which is in your own. “ If the righteous smite us by reproofs, it must be taken as a kindness, and as a precious balsam which doth not break our head, but heal us. (Psalm cxli. 5.) Not that we are bound to belie ourselves in compliance with every man’s censorious humour that will accuse us ; but we must be readier to censure ourselves than others, and readier to confess a fault, than to expect a confession from others whom we reprove. Sincerity and serious repentance will be honourable in that person who is most careful to avoid sin, and most ready penitently to confess it when he hath been overcome, and truly thankful to those that call him to repentance ; as being more desirous that God, and his laws and religion, have the glory of their holiness, than that he himself should have the undue glory of innocency, and escape the deserved shame of his sin.

It is one of the most dangerous diseases of professors, and greatest scandals of this age, that persons taken for eminently religious, are more impatient of plain (though just) reproof, than many a drunkard, swearer, or fornicator : and when they have spent hours or days in the seeming earnest confession of

their sin, and lament before God and man that they cannot do it with more grief and tears, yet they take it for a heinous injury in another that will say half so much against them, and take him for a malignant enemy of the godly who will call them as they call themselves. They look that the chief business of a preacher should be to praise them, and set them above the rest, as the only people of God; and they take him for an enemy that will tell them the truth. But the scandal is greatest in those preachers themselves, who cannot endure to hear that they are sinners. So tender and impatient of reproof are some, yea, some that for their learning, and preaching, and piety, are ranked in the highest form, or expect to be so, that almost nothing but flattery or praise can please them; and they can hardly bear the gentlest reproof, no, nor a contradiction of any of their opinions; but they seem to tell men that it is their part and privilege to be the reprovers of others, and to have no reproof, and to tell other men of sin, and be themselves accounted innocent; and to call other men to repentance for particular sins, while they themselves must have no other repentance, than in general to say that they are sinners; and to proclaim to all that their public confessions are formalities, and that it is a Christ to heal the souls of others that they preach, while they acknowledge but little work for his remedies on themselves. But he that "refuseth reproof doth err, and he that hateth it is brutish," however learned, or reverend, or pious he would be accounted. (Prov. xi. 17, and xii. 1.) "He that regardeth reproof is prudent, and he that hateth it shall die." (Prov. xv. 5—10.) As ready humble penitent confession of sin doth tend to our pardon from God, so doth it tend to our acceptation with man. When God and man will condemn the pharisee, that justifies himself till confession be extorted from him.

XIII. It is another very honourable fruit of humility to have a learning disposition, and not to be magisterial; and to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. All Christ's disciples must be as little children, (Matt. xviii. 3, 4;) especially in a learning teachable disposition, a child doth not use to set his wit against his master's, or any other that will teach him, nor to rise up against instruction, as a disputer that must have the better, and be accounted the wisest, but his daily business is submissively to learn. A genuine Christian is indeed communicative, and willing that others should partake with him in the wisdom and happiness which God hath revealed to him. But he is ready first to learn

himself, and knoweth that he must receive before he can communicate : and there is none so far below him but he is willing to hear and learn of ; but especially among his equals he is readier to hear and learn than to teach, because he is still conscious of his ignorance, and honoureth the gifts of God in others, which the proud despise. (Jam. iii. 1, and i. 19.)

But the scandalous Christian is so wise in his own eyes, that he is ever of a teaching humour, and those please him best that will sit and hear, and reverence him as an oracle, and magnify every word that drops from his lips. He is so full of himself, that he hath scarce the patience to observe well what another speaks or writeth ; and so valueth his own conceptions, that he thinks they should be valued by the hearers : and so scandalous is the teaching humour of some learned men, that they have not the common good manners or civility to suffer another to speak to the end, but they must needs interrupt him, that they may speak, as being more worthy. They take other men's speeches to be so tedious, that their patience cannot hold out the length of them. I mean not that a wise man is bound to lose his time in hearing every self-conceited person talk ; but when men are engaged in conference, or disputes, for a man to have such list to speak, that he cannot stay till another (though long) come to the end, is a scandalous incivility ; yea, some can scarce stay till two or three sentences be uttered, but their haste must tell you that they take themselves to be much the wiser, and to be fitter to teach than to hear and learn. And they are so overladen with their own conceited wisdom, that they can carry it no longer without some vent ; and so full of their own, that they have no room to receive any more from others : and being all masters, they receive from God and man the greater condemnation. (Jam. iii. 1 ; Prov. xii. 17, and i. 5, and xviii. 13.)

XIV. The genuine Christian hateth backbiting, and disgraceful reports of others, and yet can bear it from others to himself. He hath learned to love all, and to speak evil of no man, nor to receive or vend ill reports of others. He knoweth that this is the work of the devil, the mortal enemy of love. He modestly rebuketh the backbiting tongue, and, with an angry countenance, driveth it away. (Psalm xv. 3 ; Tit. iii. 2 ; Prov. xxv. 23.) Backbiters tell us that they are haters of men ; and the Apostle joins them with haters of God ; (Rom. i. 30.) Debates, backbitings, whisperings, envyings, are the scandalous Christian's

work. (2 Cor. xii. 20.) He that heareth them will either distaste them, or catch the disease, and be as bad as they. And he that heareth that he is calumniated or reproached by them behind his back is tempted to abhor both them and their profession. But to deal with men as faithful friends, and in plainness (but with prudence and love), to tell them secretly of their defects and faults, this tendeth to good, and to reconcile the minds of men, at last, and to the honour of the Christian way. (Matt. xviii. 15, 16; Levit. xix. 17; Prov. ix. 8, and xxiv. 25, and xxvii. 5; Eccl. vii. 5; Prov. xxviii. 23.)

But yet, when we are belied and reproached of ourselves, though by Christians, or teachers, or superiors, it seemeth us not to make too great a matter of it, as being tender of our own reputation, but only to be sorry for the slanderer's or backbiter's sin and misery. For men's corruption will have vent; the angry and malicious, and envious, will speak from the abundance of their hearts; and the guilty will be tender; and children will cry and quarrel; and proud contenders will be impatient. And how small a matter is it, as to us, to be judged of man, who must all be shortly judged of the Lord!

XV. He is one that would keep open to the notice of all the great difference between the godly and the wicked; and aspireth after the highest degrees of holiness, as knowing the corruptions and calamities of the weak, and how much of heaven is in holiness itself; and yet, he loveth, honoureth, and cherisheth the least spark of grace in the weakest Christian; and is none of them that censoriously despise such, nor that tyrannically tread them down, or cast them injuriously out of the church.

1. To make men believe that there is little difference between the holy and profane, is to bring all religion into contempt, and is a wickedness which God's laws throughout condemn, and his judgment shall publicly confute. (Matt. iii. 18; 2 Thess. i. 6—11; Jude xv.; Matt. xiii. 25, throughout.)

2. To take up with a little goodness, which consisteth with scandalous corruptions, is to be a scandal in the church.

3. And yet to be supercilious, and to disdain the weak, or shut out any as ungodly, whom Christ hath not warranted us to shut out, and to make stricter rules of trial and Church communion than he hath made, this is justly displeasing both to God and man. It tempteth men to abhor that religion which tendeth more to men's reproach than to their cure, and

causeth professors to set themselves higher above the weak, and at a greater distance from their neighbours than God would have them. Christ is tender of little ones, and would not have them scandalised. His own apostles were very low in knowledge all the time that he was with them on earth. It is not mere want of words that will warrant us to take men for ungodly ; even he that is “weak in faith must be received, but not to doubtful disputations.” (Rom. xiv. 15.) To cull out a few that have learned to speak better than the rest, and shut out with the dogs all the infant Christians, who must be fed with milk, because they want expressions, is one of Satan’s ways of overdoing, by which he would banish religion out of the world.

XVI. He that will glorify God by his good works must be zealous and diligent in them, and make them the serious business of his life ; he must live so that men may see that indeed he doth believe and hope for heaven. That which a man coldly speaks of, and coldly seeketh, men will think he coldly desireth ; and therefore that he doth but doubtingly believe it. A cold slothful Christian proclaims his unbelief to others, and so inviteth them to the like. When Christians bestir themselves, as for their lives, and ply God’s work with greatest diligence, and redeem their lives, as knowing that all is short enough to prepare for an endless life, this wakeneth others to life and thoughtfulness, to inquire into the matter of our hopes.

XVII. He that will glorify God must be wise and watchful, to see and take the opportunities of good before they are passed by, and to avoid temptations to error and iniquity, and especially temerity in matters of great and public consequences.

1. Good works have their season. You lose them if you take them not in their time ; that may be done now, which if you pass this time you can never do.

2. Temptations have their season, and must just then be resisted, lest many a year repair not an hour’s loss ; and they are very many : and narrow-sighted careless persons, who avoid two, and fall into the third, or avoid nineteen and are conquered by the twentieth, are always scandalous.

3. And rash adventures on any opinions or actions, but especially of public consequence, are usually most scandalous and pernicious to the church. As in military affairs, and in physic, *ubi non licet bis errare*, men’s lives must pay for our teme-

city and error, and all the world cannot remedy the effects of one mistake ; so in matters of religion, if we mistake by our rash conceitedness, and take not time for necessary trial, and proceed not as a man on the ice, or among quicksands ; with great care and deliberation, the shaking of kingdoms, the ruin of churches, the silencing of ministers, the corruption of doctrine, worship, and discipline, and the sin and damnation of many souls, may be the effect of our proud presumption and temerity ; but the humble self-suspecting man, that suspendeth his judgment and practice, till he hath thoroughly proved all, doth preserve the honour of religion, and avoid such late and dear repentance.

XVIII. The man whose works shall glorify God, must be devoted to the unity and concord of believers, and be greatly averse to dividing and love-killing opinions, words, and practices ; and, as much as in him lies, he must live peaceably with all men. (1 Cor. i. 10 ; Phil. ii. 1—3 ; Eph. iv. 3, 4, 14, 15, 16 ; Rom. xvi. 17, and xii. 18 ; 1 Thes. v. 17 ; John xvii. 24.) When Paul saith that “ Dividers serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies,” he intimateth to us, that though truth and purity be in their mouths, and really intended by them, as they take it, yet there is usually a secret self-interest that is carried on that biaseth the judgment. And when he telleth them, (Acts xx. 30,) that “ of their ownelves should men arise, speaking perverse things,” which they called (and it is like believed to be) the truth ; yet self-interest lay at the bottom, to be somebody in drawing disciples after them ; for it is so notorious a truth, that unity and concord are indispensably necessary to the church, as it is to our body, to families, to kingdoms, that men could not do so destructive a thing as dividing is, if some sin had not first caused the error of their minds. It greatly honoureth Christ and religion in the world, when believers live in love and unity : and their discords and divisions have in all ages been the scandal of the world, and the great reproach and dishonour of the Church. When Christ’s disciples are one in him, it is the way to the infidel world’s conversion, that they may believe that the father sent him. (Job xvii. 24.)

And here the devil has two sorts of servants : 1. The true schismatic, or heretic, who fearlessly and blindly divideth the churches. 2. The overdoing papist, and church-tyrant, who will have a greater unity than Christ will here give us, that so we may have none. And when Christ prays that we may be

one in him, the pope saith that we shall also be one in him, or we shall be accounted schismatics, and destroyed as such. And when the ancient church, according to Christ's institution, united all in the baptismal covenant, explained in the creed, and Paul numbereth the necessary terms of unity, Eph. iv. 4—6.

1. One body (or church of Christ) into which we are baptized.
2. One spirit of holiness in all.
3. One hope of the glorious reward.
4. One Lord by whom we do attain it.
5. One faith, even christian verity.
6. One baptism, or covenant of christianity.
7. And one God and Father of all.

And in these God would have all his servants to be one; then come in these overdoers, and they must have us to be all one in all their papal policy, and all the decrees of their Pope and Councils *de Fide*, and in their multitude of corruptions, and eccremonious impositions: which is as much as to say, 'You shall have no unity;' for he that saith to all the city or kingdom, you shall be destroyed for discord, or reproached as dividers, if you are not all of one complexion, or have not all the same appetite, age, or bodily stature, doth pronounce reproach or destruction on them absolutely: so is it with all others that put their self-devised terms on their brethren as necessary to unity and peace, on how pious or fair pretences soever; impossible conditions make the thing impossible. These are the church-tearing scandals. These are the snares by which Satan hath made the church a scorn, and our religion a stumbling-block to Turks and heathens; but had the peacemakers been heard, who learned of the Holy Ghost (Acts xv,) to impose nothing on the brethren but necessary things, and who have laboured to revive love, and shame emulations and divisions, God had been more glorified by men, and the reproach of the churches and solemn assemblies taken away. When all sects and parties have bustled and raised a dust in the world to foul the church, and to blind each other; if ever the church's glory be restored, and our shame taken away, it will be by men of love and peace, by healing, uniting, reconciling principles and means.

XIX. He that will glorify God, must live in and to the will of God, and seek to reduce his own will wholly into God's, and to destroy in himself all will that striveth against God's will.

1. The disposing will of God, our owner, must be absolutely submitted to, and the bounteous will of God, our benefactor, thankfully and joyfully acknowledged.

2. The ruling will of God our lawgiver must be with daily

study and care obeyed, and his punishing and rewarding justice glorified.

3. The final felicitating will and love of God, our ultimate end and object, that we may please him, and be everlastingly pleased in him, love him, and be loved by him, must be totally desired and sought, as the only and perfect rest of souls.

O ! that is the holy, the joyful, the honourable Christian, who daily laboureth, and in some good measure doth prevail, to have no will but the will of God, and that which wholly is resolved into it ; who looketh no further to know what he should do, but to know by his word what is the law or will of God : who believeth that all that God willeth is good, and had rather have his life, and health, and wealth, and friends, at God's will and disposal, than his own ; who knoweth that God's will is love itself, and that to please him is the end of all the world, and the only felicity of men and angels ; and resteth wholly in the pleasing of that will. What can be more wise and just than to have the same will (objectively) with him who is infinitely wise and just ? What can be more honourable than to have the same will as God himself, and (so far) as his children, to be like our Father ? What can be more orderly and harmonious, than for the will of the creature to move according to the Creator's will, and to be duly subservient to it, and accurately compliant with it ? What can be more holy, nay, what else is holiness, but a will and life devoted and conformed to the will of God ? What can be more safe, or what else can be safe at all, but to will the same things which the most perfect wisdom doth direct to, and infinite love itself doth choose ? And what can be more easy and quieting to the soul, than to rest in that will which is always good, which never was misguided, and never chose amiss, and never was frustrated, or missed of its decreed ends ? If we have no will but what is (objectively) the same with God's, that is, if we wholly comply with, and follow his will as our guide, and rest in his will as our ultimate end, our wills will never be disordered, sinful, misled, or frustrated. God hath all that he willeth (absolutely) and is never disappointed ; and so should we if we could will nothing but what he willeth. And would you not take him unquestionably for a happy man, who hath whatsoever he would have ? Yea, and would have nothing but what is more just and good ? There is no way to this happiness but making the will of God our will. God will not mutably change his will to bring it to ours ; should holiness itself be conformed

to sinners, and perfection to imperfection? But we must, by grace, bring over our wills to God's, and then they are in joint; and then only will they find content and rest. O what would I beg more earnestly in the world, than a will conformed wholly to God's will, and cast into that mould, and desiring nothing but what God willeth!

But contrarily, what can be more foolish than for such infants and ignorant souls as we, to will that which infinite wisdom is against? What more dishonourable than to be even at the very heart so contrary or unlike to God? What can be more irregular and unjust than for a created worm to set his will against his Maker's? What else is sin but a will and life that is cross to the regulating will of God? What can be more perilous and pernicious than to forsake a perfect, unerring guide, and to follow such ignorant judgments as our own in matters of eternal consequence? What can that soul expect, but a restless state in an uncomfortable wilderness, yea, perpetual self-vexation and despair, who forsakes God's will to follow his own, and hath a will that doth go cross to God's? Poor self-tormenting sinners! consider that your own wills are your idols, which you set up against the will of God, and your own wills are the tyrants to which you are in bondage; your own wills are your prison, and the executioners that torment you with fear, and grief and disappointments. What is it that you are afraid of, but lest you miss of your own wills? For sure you fear not lest God's will should be overcome and frustrated; what are your cares about but this? What are your sighs, and groans, and tears for? And what is it else that you complain of, but that your own wills are not fulfilled? It is not that God hath not his will. What is it that you are so impatient of, but the crossing of your own wills? This person crosseth them, and that accident crosseth them, and God crosseth them, and you cross them yourselves; and crossed they will be while they are cross to the will of God; for all this while they are as a bone out of joint; there is no ease till it be set right. In a word, a will that is contrary to God's will, and striveth and struggleth against it, is the offspring of the devil, the sum of all sin, and a foretaste of hell, even a restless self-tormenter; and to will nothing but what God willeth, and to love his will, and study to please him, and rest therein, is the rectitude and only rest of souls; and he that cannot rest contentedly in the will of God must be for ever restless.

And when such a holy will and contentment appeareth in

you, mankind will reverence it, and see that your natures are divine ; and as they dare not reproach the will of God, so they will fear to speak evil of yours : when they see that you choose but what God first chooseth for you, and your wills do but follow the will of God, men will be afraid of provoking God against them as blasphemers, if they should scorn, deride, or vilify you. And could we convince all men that our course is but the same which God commandeth, it would do much to stop their reproach and persecution. And if they see that we can joyfully suffer reproach, or poverty, or pains, or death, and joyfully pass away to God when he shall call us, and live and die in a contented complacency in the will of God, they will see that you have a beginning of heaven on earth, which no tyrant, no loss, or cross, or suffering, can deprive you of, while you can joyfully say, "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts xxi. 14.)

Object. But if it be God's will for sin to punish me, or forsake me, should I contentedly rest in that revenging will ?

Ans. 1. That sin of ours which maketh us incapable objects of the complacent will of God is evil, and to be hated. But that will of God which is terminated on such an object, according to the nature of it, by just hatred, is good, and should be loved. And punishment is hurtful to us ; but God's will and justice is good and amiable. 2. If you will close with God's will you need not fear his will. If your will be unfeignedly to obey his commanding will, and to be and do what he would have you, his will is not to condemn or punish you. But if God's will prescribe you a holy life, and your will rebel, and be against it, no wonder if God's will be to punish you when your wills would not be punished. (John i. 13 ; Heb. x. 10 ; John vii. 17 ; Luke xii. 47.)

XX. It glorifieth God and religion in the world when Christians are faithful in all their relations, and diligently endeavour the sanctifying and happiness of all the societies which they are members of.

I. Holy families, well ordered, do much glorify God, and keep up religion in the world.

1. When husbands live with their wives in wisdom, holiness, and love, and wives are pious, obedient, meek, and peaceable, (Eph. v. 22, 25 ; Col. iii. 18, 19.) yea, unto such husbands as "obey not the word, that without the word may be won by the conversation of the wives." (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.)

2. When parents make it their great and constant care and

labour, with all holy skill, and love, and diligence, to educate their children in the fear of God, and the love of goodness, and the practice of a holy life, and to save them from sin, and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and have more tender care of their souls than of their bodies, that so the church may have a succession of saints; and when children love, honour, and obey their parents, and comfort them by their forwardness to all that is good, and their avoiding the ways and company of the ungodly. (Eph. vi. 1; Psalm i. 1, 2.)

3. When masters rule their servants as the servants of God, and servants willingly obey their masters, and serve them with cheerful diligence and trust, and are as careful and faithful about all their good and business as if it were not their own. (Eph. vi. 5, 9; Col. iii. 21, and iv. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 18.)

When the houses of Christians are societies of saints, and churches of God, and live in love and concord together, and all are laborious and faithful in their callings, abhorring idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, pride, contention, and evil-speaking, and dealing justly with all their neighbours, and denying their own right for love and peace; this is the way to glorify religion in the world.

II. Well-ordered churches are the second sort of societies which must glorify God and propagate religion in the world.

1. When the pastors are learned in the Holy Scriptures, and skilful in their sacred work, and far excel all the people in the light of faith and knowledge, and in love to goodness, and to men's souls, and in lively, zealous diligence for God, and for men's salvation, thinking no labour, cost, or suffering, too dear a price for the people's good; when no sufferings or reproaches move them, nor account they their lives dear to them, that they may but finish their course and ministry with joy. When their public preaching hath convincing light and clearness, and powerful, affectionate application; and their private oversight is performed with impartiality, humility, and unwearied diligence, and they are able to resolve the people's cases of conscience solidly, and to exhort them earnestly, with powerful reason, and melting love; this honoureth religion, and winneth souls.

When they envy not one another, nor strive who shall be greatest or uppermost; but contrariwise, who shall be most serviceable to his brethren, and to the people's souls. When they oversee and feed the flock of God which is among them, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a

ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock ; and seeking not theirs, but them ; are willing to spend and be spent for their sakes ; yea, though the more they love them the less they are beloved ; not minding high things, but condescending to men of low estate ; this is the way for ministers to glorify God. (1 Pet. v. 1—4 ; Acts xx. ; 2 Tim. i. 14, 15 ; 1 Tim. iv. 10 ; Heb. iv. 11—13 ; Acts xx. 24 ; 1 Thes. ii. 8 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1—3 ; Luke xxii. 24—26 ; 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15 ; Rom. xii. 16.)

When ministers are above all worldly interest, and so teach and live that the people may see that they seek not the honour which is of men, but only that which is of God, and lay not up a treasure on earth, but in heaven ; and trade all for another world, and are further from pride than the lowest of the flock ; when they have not only the clothing of sheep, but their harmless, profitable nature, and not the ravenousness or bloody jaws of destroying wolves. When they use not carnal weapons in their warfare, but by an eminency of light, and love, and life, endeavour to work the same in others ; when they are of more public spirit than the people, and more self-denying, and above all private interests, and envyings and revenge, and are more patient in suffering than the people, through the power of stronger faith, and hope, and love. When they are wholly addicted to holiness and peace, and are zealous for the love and unity of believers, and become all things to all men to win some ; in meekness instructing opposers, abhorring contention, doing nothing in strife or vain glory, but preferring others before themselves ; not preaching Christ in pride or envy, nor seeking their own praise, but thirsting after men's conversion, edification, and salvation. Thus must Christ be honoured by his ministers in the world.

When they speak the same things, being of one mind and judgment, uniting in the common faith, and contending for that against infidels and heretics, and, so far as they have attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same things ; and where they are differently minded or opinioned, wait in meekness and love till God reveal to them the reconciling truth. When they study more to narrow controversies, than to widen them, and are skilful in detecting those ambiguous words, and verbal and notional differences, which to the unskilful seem material. When they are as surgeons, and not as soldiers, as skilful to heal differences, as the proud and ignorant are ready to make them, and can plainly show the dark contenders, wherein they

agree, and do not know it. When they live in that sweet and amicable concord, which may tell the world that they love one another, and are of one faith and heart, being one in Christ. This is the way for ministers to glorify God in the world. And with thankfulness to God I acknowledge that such, for many years, I had my conversation with, of whom the world that now despiseth them is not worthy. (Phil. ii. 21; Matt. vi. 19—21; John v. 44; 2 Cor. x. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 22, and x. 33; Phil. ii. 1—3; 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4; Jam. iii. 14—16; 2 Tim. ii. 14, 24; Phil. iii. 15—17; John xvii. 24; Eph. iv. 3—5; 1 Cor. i. 10; James iii. 17, 18.)

And the maintaining of sound doctrine, spiritual, reasonable, and reverent worship, without ludicrous and unreverent trifling, or rudeness, or ignorance, or superstition, or needless singularity, much honoureth God (as is aforesaid). And so doth the exercise of holy discipline in the churches. Such discipline whereby the precious may be separated from the vile, and the holy from the profane, by authority and order; and not by popular usurpation, disorder, or unjust presumptions. Where the cause is fairly tried and judged before men are cast out, or denied the privileges of the church. Where charity appears in embracing the weakest, and turning away none that turn not away from Christ, and condemning none without just proof; and justice and holiness appeareth in purging out the dangerous leaven, and in trying and rejecting the obstinately impenitent heretic, and gross sinner after the first and second admonition, and disowning them that will not hear the church. (Matt. xviii. 15, 16; Tit. iii. 10; 1 Cor. v. 11.) When the neglect of discipline doth leave the church as polluted a society as the infidel world, and Christians that are owned in the public communion are as vicious, sensual, and ungodly, as Heathens and Mahometans, it is one of the greatest injuries to Christ and our religion in the world. For it is by the purifying of a peculiar people, zealous of good works, that Christ is known to be really the Saviour of the world; and by making his followers better than others, that he, and his doctrine and religion are known to be the best. Travellers tell me that nothing so much hindereth the conversion of the Mahometans as their daily experience that the lives of the Greek Christians, and others that live among them, are too ordinarily worse than theirs. More drunkenness, and more falsehood, lying, deceit, it is said are among those Christians than among the Turks. If that be true, those

are no true Christians; but wo be to them by whom such offence cometh. I have oft heard those soldiers justly censured as profane who turn churches into stables (without great necessity). But how much more hurtfully profane are they who, for carnal ends, confound the world and the church, and keep the multitude of the most sensual, ungodly persons in their communion, without ever calling them personally to repentance! and use the church keys but to revenge themselves on those that differ from them in some opinions, or that cross their interest and wills, or that seem too smart and zealous in the dislike of their carnality, sloth, and church pollutions? When the churches are as full of scandalous sinners as the assemblies of infidels and heathens, the world will hardly ever believe that infidelity and heathenism is not as good as the christian faith. It is more by persons than by precepts that the world will judge of Christ and Christianity. And what men on earth do more scandalise the world, more expose Christianity to reproach, more harden infidels, more injure Christ, and serve the devil, than they that fill the church with impious, carnal pastors, (as in the church of Rome,) and then with impious, carnal people, maintained constantly in her communion, without any open disowning by a distinguishing, reforming discipline? When such pastors are no better than the soberer sort of heathens, save only in their opinion and formal words, and when their ordinary communicants are no better, it is no thanks to them if all turn not infidels that know them, and if Christianity be contemned, and decay out of the world; and it is along of such that disorderly separations attempt that discipline, and distinguishing of the godly and notoriously wicked, which such ungodly pastors will not attempt. (See Lev. xix. 17; Matt. xviii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. v; Tit. iii. 10; Jer. xv. 19; Psalm xv.; 2 Thes. iii; Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 4, 5.)

III. But O how great an honour is it to God and to religion, when kings, princes, and states, do zealously devote their power to God, from whom they do receive it, and labour to make their kingdoms holy! When truth, sobriety, and piety have the countenance of human powers, and rulers wholly set themselves to further the faithful preaching and practising of the holy faith, and to unite and strengthen the ministers and churches, and to suppress iniquity, and to be a terror to evil doers, it taketh Satan's great advantage out of his hand, and worketh on carnal men by such means as they can feel and un-

derstand. Not that God needs the help of man, but that he hath settled officers and a natural order, by which he usually worketh in the world: and as it cannot be expected that an unholy parent and master should have a holy family, or an unholy pastor a holy church, unless by extraordinary mercy; no more can we expect that ungodly magistrates should have a godly kingdom or commonwealth, of which the sacred history of the Jewish and Israelitish kings doth give you a full confirmation. But this I must now say no more of. And thus I have told you, in twenty particulars, what are those good works in which the light of Christians must shine before men to the glorifying of God.

Object. Doth not Matt. v. 10—12, contradict all this? "Blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake."

Ans. No. You must here distinguish, first, of men; secondly, of righteousness and good works.

I. The men that we have to do with are, first, ordinary, natural men, corrupted by original sin, but yet not hardened to serpentine malignity, as some are: secondly, or they are men that, by sinning against nature and common light, are forsaken and given up to malignant minds.

II. The good works which natural light and human interest can discern and commend, do differ from those which are merely evangelical, of supernatural revelation.

1. Malignant persons hardened in enmity, will scorn and persecute holiness itself, and even that good which reason justifies, and therefore are called unreasonable wicked men. (2 Thess. iii. 2.) Good works with these men make us odious, unless they are such as gratify their lusts.

2. But there are natural men not yet so hardened and forsaken, who are usually them that the gospel doth convert: and these have not yet so blinded nature, nor lost all sense of good and evil, but that they honour him that doth good in all the twenty particulars which I have named, and think ill of those that do the contrary, though yet they relish not the christian righteousness, and things of supernatural revelation, for want of faith.

Let us briefly now apply it.

Use 1. This informs us what an honourable state Christianity and true godliness is. When God hath made us to be the lights of the world, to shine before men to the glory of his holiness, as the sun and stars do to the glory of his power, no wonder if

in glory we shall shine as stars in the firmament of our Father, if we do so here. (Dan. xii. 3 ; Matt. xiii. 43 ; Phil. ii. 15.) This must not make us proud, but thankful ; for our pride is our shame, and our humility is our glory.

Use 2. And what wonder if all the powers of darkness do bend their endeavours to obscure this sacred light ? The Prince of Darkness is the enemy of the Father of Lights ; and this is the great war between Christ and Satan in the world. Christ is the light of the world, and setteth up ministerial lights for the world and for his house. His work is to send them forth, to teach them, and defend them, to send his spirit to work in and by them, to bring men to the everlasting light. And Satan's work is to stir up all that he can against them, high and low, learned and unlearned, and to put Christ's lights, both ministers and people, under a bushel ; and to make the world believe that they are enemies, and come to hurt them, that they may be hated as the scorn and off-scouring of the world, and to keep up ignorance in ministers themselves, that the church's eyes being dark, the darkness may be great.

But let us pray that God would "forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn their hearts ;" and that he would "open our lips, that our mouths may show forth his praise : " and though his ministers and people have their faulty weaknesses, that he would "be merciful to our infirmities, and grant that those things which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man worketh against us may be brought to nought, and by the providence of his goodness may be dispersed ; that we, his servants, being hindered by no persecution, may give thanks to him in his holy church, and serve him in holiness and pureness of life, to his glory," through Jesus Christ.

Use 3. You may see hence how much those men are mistaken, who talk of the good works or lives of Christians, as that which must have no honour, lest it dishonour God ; as if all the honour were taken from Christ which is given to good works, and the patient's health were the dishonour of the physician, when we are redeemed and purified to be zealous of good works, and created for them in Christ Jesus, as Titus ii. 14 ; Eph. ii. 10. Yea, and shall be judged according to our works.

Use 4. This informeth you that the good works or lives of Christians is a great means ordained by Christ for the convincing of sinners, and the glorifying of God in the world. Preaching doth much, but it is not appointed to do all. The lives of

preachers must also be a convincing light; and all true Christians, men and women, are called to preach to the world by their good works: and a holy, righteous, and sober life, is the great ordinance of God, appointed for the saving of yourselves and others. O that the Lord would bring this close to all our hearts! Christians, if you abhor dumb teachers, because they starve and betray souls, take heed lest you condemn yourselves: you owe men the convincing helps of a holy, fruitful life, as well as the preacher owes them his ministry. Preach by well doing; shine out in good works, or else you are no lights of Christ, but betrayers of men's souls: you rob all about you of a great ordinance of God, a great means appointed by him for men's salvation. The world will judge of the Scriptures by your lives, and of religion by your lives, and of Christ himself by your lives. If your lives are such as tend to persuade men that Christians are but like other men, yea, that they are but self-conceited sinners, as carnal, sensual, uncharitable, proud, self-seeking, worldly, envious, as others, and so that Christianity is but such, this is a horrid blaspheming of Christ, how highly soever your tongues may speak of him, and how low soever your knees may bow to him. O that you knew how much of God's great work of salvation in the world is to be done by Christians' lives. Your lives must teach men to believe that there is a heaven to be won, and a hell to be escaped: your lives must help men to believe that Christ and his word are true: your lives must tell men what holiness is, and convince them of the need of regeneration; and that the Spirit of sanctification is no fancy, but the witness of Jesus Christ in the world: your lives must tell men, by repentance and obedience, that sin is the greatest evil; and must show them the difference between the righteous and the wicked: yea, the holiness of God must be glorified by your lives. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Scripture, the church, and heaven itself, must be known much by our lives. And may not I say, then, with the apostle, (2 Peter iii. 11,) "What manner of persons, then, ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, when the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world?" (Tit. ii. 11, 12.)

Use 5. But alas! what suitable and plentiful matter doth this offer us for our humiliation and lamentation on such a day as this? A flood of tears is not too much to lament the

scandals of the christian world. With what wounded hearts should we think of the state of the churches in Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Abascia, and all the oppressed Greeks, and all the poor deceived and oppressed Papists, and all the ignorant, carnal Protestants? O! how unlike are your lives to your christian faith, and to the pattern left them by their Lord. Doth a worldly, proud, and fleshly, and contentious clergy glorify God? Doth an ignorant ministry glorify him, who understand not the message which they should deliver? Will the world turn Christians by seeing Christians seek the blood and ruin of each other? and hearing even preachers reproach each other? or seeing them silence or persecute each other? or by seeing the people run into many sects, and separate from one another, as unworthy of christian communion? Will proud, ignorant, censorious, fleshly, worldly professors of religion ever draw the world to love religion? Or will peevish, self-willed, impatient, discontented souls, that are still wrangling, crying, and repining, make men believe that their religion rejoiceth, blesseth, and sanctifieth the soul, and maketh men far happier than all others in the world? Alas! what wonder that so small a part of the world are Christians, and so few converted to the love of holiness, when the great means is denied them by you which God hath appointed for their conversion, and the world hath not one helper for a hundred or thousand that it should have? You cry out at those that put out the church-lights, under pretence of snuffing them, while yourselves are darkness, or as a stinking snuff.

O, brethren and Christians all, I beseech you let us now, and often, closely ask ourselves, what do we more than an Antonine, a Seneca, or a Cicero, or a Socrates did, beyond opinions, words, and formalities? What do you which is like to convert the world, to convince an infidel, or glorify God! Nay, do not some among us think that it is the height, or part of their religion, to live so contrary to the world, as to be singular from others, even in lawful or indifferent things, and to do little or nothing which the world thinks well of? As if crossing and displeasing men needlessly were their winning conversation. O, when once we go as far beyond them in love, humility, meekness, patience, fruitfulness, mortification, self-denial, and heavenliness, as we do in opinions, profession, and self-esteem, then we shall win souls, and glorify God, and he will also glorify us.

Use 6. And here we see the wonderful mercy of God to the world, who hath appointed them so much means for their conviction and salvation. So many Christians as there be in the world, so many practical preachers and helps to men's conversion are there appointed by God, and let the blame and shame lie on us, where it is due, and not on God, if yet the world remain in darkness. - It is God's will that every Christian in the world should be as a star, to shine to sinners in their darkness; and O then how gloriously would the world be bespangled and enlightened! If you say, 'why, then, doth not God make Christians better?' That is a question which cannot be well answered, without a larger opening of the methods of grace than we can now have leisure for, and therefore must be done in its proper season.

Use 7. Those that honour God he will honour, and therefore let us also give them that honour which is their due. The barren professors, who honour themselves by overvaluing their poor knowledge, gifts, and grace, and affecting too great a distance from their brethren, and censuring others as unworthy of their communion without reproof, are not the men that honour God, and can lay claim to no great honour from men. But God hath among us a prudent, holy, humble, laborious, patient ministry, that glorify him by their works and patience, and he hath among us a meek and humble, a blameless, and a loving and fruitful sort of Christians, who imitate the purity, charity, and simplicity, yea, and concord of the primitive church. These tell the world, to their sight and experience, that religion is better than ignorance and carnality. These tell the world, that Christ and his holy word are true, while he doth that in renewing and sanctifying souls, which none else in the world can do. These show the world, that faith, and holiness, and self-denial, and the hopes of immortality, are no deceits. These glorify God, and are the great benefactors of the world. I must solemnly profess, that did I not know such a people in the world, who, notwithstanding their infirmities, do manifest a holy and heavenly disposition in their lives, I should want myself so great a help to my faith in Christ, and the promise of life eternal, that I fear, without it, my faith would fail. And had I never known a holier ministry and people than those that live but a common life, and excel heathens in nothing but their belief or opinions, and church orders and formalities, I should find my faith assaulted with so great temptations as I

doubt I should not well withstand. No talk will persuade men that he is the best physician that healeth no more nor worse diseases than others do. Nor would Christ be taken for the Saviour of the world, if he did not save men. And he saveth them not if he make them not holier and better than other men.

O, then, how much do we owe to Christ for sending his Spirit into his saints, and for exemplifying his holy word on holy souls, and for giving us as many visible proofs of his holiness, power, and truth, as there are holy Christians in the world! We must not flatter them, nor excuse their faults, nor puff them up. But because the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, we must accordingly love and honour them, and Christ in them. For Christ telleth us, that he is glorified in them here, (John, xvii. 10,) and that what is done to them, his brethren, even the least, is taken as done to him, (Matt. xxv.,) and he will be glorified and admired in them when he cometh in his glory at the last, (2 Thess. i. 8, 10,) and he will glorify their very works before all the world, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE

CURE OF MELANCHOLY

AND

OVERMUCH SORROW,

BY

FAITH AND PHYSIC.

THE

CURE OF MELANCHOLY AND OVERMUCH SORROW, BY FAITH AND PHYSIC.*

Question.—What are the best preservatives against melancholy and overmuch sorrow?

2 COR. ii. 7.

Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow?

THE brevity of a sermon not allowing me time for any unnecessary work, I shall not stay to open the context, nor to inquire whether the person here spoken of be the same that is condemned for incest in 1 Cor. v., or some other, nor whether Chrysostom had good tradition for it, that it was a doctor of the church, or made such after his sin? Nor whether the late expositor† be in the right, who thence gathers that he was one of the bishops of Achaia; and that it was a synod of bishops that were to excommunicate him; who yet held that very congregation then had a bishop, and that he was to be excommunicated in the congregation, and that the people should not have followed or favoured such a teacher, it would have been no schism, or sinful separation, to have forsaken him. All that I now intend is, to open this last clause of the verse, which gives the reason why the censured sinner, being penitent, should be forgiven and comforted; viz., Lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, as it includeth these three doctrines, which I shall handle altogether, viz.:

* This sermon was written for the morning exercises at Cripplegate, but not preached. The omissions in the folio edition of Baxter's works are inserted from the original edition of the sermon in the "Continuation of Morning Exercise Questions, and cases of conscience, practically resolved by sundry ministers, in October, 1682."

T. R.

† Dr. Hammond.

1. That sorrow, even for sin, may be overmuch.
2. That overmuch sorrow swalloweth one up.
3. Therefore it must be resisted and assuaged by necessary comfort, both by others, and by ourselves.

In handling these, I shall observe this order : 1. I shall show you when sorrow is overmuch. 2. How overmuch sorrow doth swallow a man up. 3. What are the causes of it. 4. What is the cure.

I. It is too notorious that overmuch sorrow for sin is not the ordinary case of the world. A stupid, blockish disposition is the common cause of men's perdition. The plague of a hard heart, and seared conscience, keeps most from all due sense of sin, or danger, or misery, and of all the great and everlasting concerns of their guilty souls. A dead sleep in sin doth deprive most of the use of sense and understanding ; they do some of the outward acts of religion as in a dream ; they are vowed to God in baptism by others, and they profess to stand to it themselves ; they go to church, and say over the words of the creed, and Lord's prayer, and commandments ; they receive the Lord's Supper, and all as in a dream ! They take on them to believe that sin is the most hateful thing to God, and hurtful to man, and yet they live in it with delight and obstinacy ; they dream that they repent of it, when no persuasion will draw them to forsake it, and while they hate them that would cure them, and will not be as bad and mad as they who feel [not] in them any effectual sorrow for what is past, or effectual sense of their present badness, or effectual resolution for a new and holy life. They dream that there is a judgment, a heaven, and a hell, but would they not be more affected with things of such unspeakable consequence if they were awake ? Would they be wholly taken up with the matters of the flesh and world, and scarce have a serious thought or word of eternity, if they were awake ? O how sleepily and senselessly do they think, and talk, and hear of the great work of man's redemption by Christ, and of the need of justifying and sanctifying grace, and of the joys and miseries of the next life ; and yet they say that they believe them ! When we preach or talk to them of the greatest things, with the greatest evidence, and plainness, and earnestness that we can, we speak as to the dead, or to men asleep ; they have ears, and hear not, nothing goeth to their hearts. One would think that a man that reads in Scripture, and believes the everlasting glory offered, and the

dreadful punishment threatened, and the necessity of holiness to salvation, and of a Saviour to deliver us from sin and hell, and how sure and near such a passage into the unseen world is to us all, should have much ado to moderate and bear the sense of such overwhelming things. But most men so little regard or feel them, that they have neither time nor heart to think of them as their concern, but hear of them as of some foreign land, where they have no interest, and which they never think to see. Yea, one would think by their senseless neglect of preparation, and their worldly minds and lives, that they were asleep, or in jest, when they confess that they must die, and that when they lay their friends in the grave, and see the skulls and bones cast up, they were but all this while in a dream, or did not believe that their turn is near. Could we tell how to awaken sinners, they would come to themselves, and have other thoughts of these great things, and show it quickly by another kind of life. Awakened reason could never be so befooled and besotted as we see the wicked world to be. But God hath an awakening day for all, and he will make the most senseless soul to feel, by grace or punishment.

And because a hardened heart is so great a part of the malady and misery of the unregenerate, and a soft and tender heart is much of the new nature promised by Christ, many awakened souls under the work of conversion think they can never have sorrow enough, and that their danger lies in hard-heartedness, and they never fear overmuch sorrow till it hath swallowed them up; yea, though there be too much of other causes in it, yet if any of it be for sin, they then cherish it as a necessary duty, or at least perceive not the danger of excess: and some think those to be the best Christians who are most in doubts, and fears, and sorrows, and speak almost nothing but uncomfortable complaints, but this is a great mistake.

1. Sorrow is overmuch when it is fed by a mistaken cause. All is too much where none is due, and great sorrow is too much when the cause requireth but less.

If a man thinketh that somewhat is a duty, which is no duty, and then sorrow for omitting it, such sorrow is all too much, because it is undue, and caused by error. Many I have known who have been greatly troubled, because they could not bring themselves to that length or order of meditation, for which they had neither ability nor time; and many, because they could not reprove sin in others, when prudent instruction and intimation

was more suitable than reproof. And many are troubled, because in their shops and callings they think of any thing but God, as if our outward business must have no thoughts.

Superstition always breeds such sorrows, when men make themselves religious duties which God never made them, and then come short in the performance of them. Many dark souls are assaulted by the erroneous, and told that they are in a wrong way; and they must take up some error as a necessary truth, and so are cast into perplexing difficulties, and perhaps repent of the truth which they before owned. Many fearful Christians are troubled about every meal that they eat, about their clothes, their thoughts and words, thinking or fearing that all is sinful which is lawful, and that unavoidable infirmities are heinous sins. All such as these are troubles and sorrows without cause, and therefore overmuch.

2. Sorrow is overmuch when it hurteth and overwhelmeth nature itself, and destroyeth bodily health or understanding. Grace is the due qualification of nature, and duty is the right employment of it, but neither of them must destroy it. As civil, and ecclesiastic, and domestic government are for edification and not for destruction, so also is personal self-government. God will have mercy and not sacrifice; and he that would not have us kill or hurt our neighbour on pretence of religion, would not have us destroy or hurt ourselves, being bound to love our neighbour but as ourselves. As fasting is a duty no further than it tendeth to some good, as to express or exercise true humiliation, or to mortify some fleshly lust, &c., so is it with sorrow for sin: it is too much when it doth more hurt than good. But of this next.

II. When sorrow swalloweth up the sinner, it is overmuch, and to be restrained. As,

1. The passions of grief and trouble of mind do oft overthrow the sober and sound use of reason, so that a man's judgment is corrupted and perverted by it, and is not in that case to be trusted. As a man in raging anger, so one in fear or great trouble of mind thinks not of things as they are, but as his passion represents them, about God and religion, and about his own soul, and his actions, or about his friends or enemies, his judgment is perverted, and usually false, and, like an inflamed eye, thinks all things of the colour which is like itself. When it perverteth reason it is overmuch.

2. Overmuch sorrow disableth man to govern his thoughts;

and ungoverned thoughts must needs be both sinful and very troublesome: grief carrieth them away as in a torrent. You may almost as easily keep the leaves of trees in quietness and order in a blustering wind as the thoughts of one in troubling passions. If reason would stop them from perplexing subjects, or turn them to better and sweeter things, it cannot do it; it hath no power against the stream of troubling passions.

3. Overmuch sorrow would swallow up faith itself, and greatly hindereth its exercise. They are matters of unspeakable joy which the gospel calleth us to believe: and it is wonderful hard for a grieved, troubled soul to believe any thing that is matter of joy, much less of so great joy as pardon and salvation are. Though it dare not flatly give God the lie, it hardly believes his free and full promises, and the expressions of his readiness to receive all penitent, returning sinners. Passionate grief serveth to feel somewhat contrary to the grace and promises of the gospel, and that feeling hinders faith.

4. Overmuch sorrow yet more hindereth hope, when men think that they do believe God's word, and that his promises are all true to others, yet cannot they hope for the promised blessings to themselves. Hope is that grace by which a soul that believeth the gospel to be true, doth comfortably expect that the benefits promised shall be its own; it is an applying act. The first act of faith saith the gospel is true, which promiseth grace and glory through Christ. The next act of faith saith, 'I will trust my soul and all upon it, and take Christ for my Saviour and help:' and then Hope saith, 'I hope for this salvation by him:' but melancholy, overwhelming sorrow and trouble is as great an adversary to this hope as water is to fire, or snow to heat. Despair is its very pulse and breath. Fain such would have hope, but they cannot. All their thoughts are suspicious and misgiving, and they can see nothing but danger and misery, and a helpless state. And when hope, which is the anchor of the soul, is gone, what wonder if they be continually tossed with storms.

5. Overmuch sorrow swalloweth up all comfortable sense of the infinite goodness and love of God, and thereby hindereth the soul from loving him; and in this it is an adversary to the very life of holiness. It is exceeding hard for such a troubled soul to apprehend the goodness of God at all, but much harder to judge that he is good and amiable to him: but as a man that in the deserts of Lybia is scorched with the violent heats of the

sun, and is ready to die with drought and faintness, may confess that the sun is the life of the earth and a blessing to mankind, but it is misery and death to him. Even so, these souls, overwhelmed with grief, may say that God is good to others, but he seems an enemy to them, and to seek their destruction. They think he hateth them, and hath forsaken them; and how can they love such a God who they think doth hate them, and resolve to damn them, and hath decreed them to it from eternity, and brought them into the world for no other end? They that can hardly love an enemy that doth but defame them, or oppress and wrong them, will more hardly love a God that they believe will damn them, and hath, remedilessly appointed them thereto.

6. And then it must needs follow that this distemper is a false and injurious judge of all the word and works of God, and of all his mercies and corrections. Whatever such a one reads or hears, he thinks it all makes against him: every sad word and threatening in Scripture he thinks meaneth him, as if it named him. But the promises and comforts he hath no part in, as if he had been by name excepted. All God's mercies are extenuated, and taken for no mercies, as if God intended them all but to make his sin the greater, and to increase his heavy reckoning and further his damnation. He thinks God doth but sugar over poison to him, and give him all in hatred, and not in any love, with a design to sink him the deeper in hell: and if God correct him, he supposeth that it is but the beginning of his misery, and God doth torment him before the time.

7. And by this you see that it is an enemy to thankfulness. It rather reproacheth God for his mercies, as if they were injuries, than giveth him any hearty thanks.

8. And by this you may see that this distemper is quite contrary to the joy in the Holy Ghost, yea, and the peace in which God's kingdom much consisteth: nothing seemeth joyful unto such distressed souls. Delighting in God, and in his word and ways, is the flower and life of true religion. But these that I speak of can delight in nothing; neither in God, nor in his word, nor any duty. They do it as a sick man eateth his meat, for mere necessity, and with some loathing and averseness.

9. And all this sheweth us that this disease is much contrary to the very tenour of the gospel. Christ came as a deliverer of the captives, a Saviour to reconcile us to God, and bring us glad

tidings of pardon and everlasting joy : where the gospel was received it was great rejoicing, and so proclaimed by angels and by men. But all that Christ hath done, and purchased, and offered, and promised, seems nothing but matter of doubt and sadness to this disease.

10. Yea, it is a distemper which greatly advantageth Satan to cast in blasphemous thoughts of God, as if he were bad, and a hater and destroyer even of such as fain would please him. The design of the devil is to describe God to us as like himself; who is a malicious enemy, and delighteth to do hurt : and if all men hate the devil for his hurtfulness, would he not draw men to hate and blaspheme God, if he could make men believe that he is more hurtful ? The worshipping God, as represented by an image, is odious to him, because it seems to make him like such a creature as that image representeth. How much more blasphemous is it to feign him to be like the malicious devils ? Diminutive, low thoughts of his goodness, as well as of his greatness, is a sin which greatly injureth God : as if you should think that he is no better or trustier than a father or a friend, much more to think him such as distempered souls imagine him. You would wrong his ministers if you should describe them as Christ doth the false prophets, as hurtful thorns, and thistles, and wolves. And is it not worse to think far worse than this of God ?

11. This overmuch sorrow doth unfit men for all profitable meditation ; it confounds their thoughts, and turneth them to hurtful distractions and temptations ; and the more they muse the more they are overwhelmed.

And it turneth prayer into mere complaint, instead of child-like-believing supplications.

It quite indisposeth the soul to God's masses, and especially to a comfortable sacramental communion, and fetcheth greater terror from it, lest unworthy receiving will but hasten and increase their damnation.

And it rendereth preaching and counsel too oft unprofitable : say what you will that is never so convincing, either it doth not change them, or is presently lost.

12. And it is a distemper which maketh all sufferings more heavy, as falling upon a poor diseased soul, and having no comfort to set against it ; and it maketh death exceeding terrible, because they think it will be the gate of hell ; so that life seemeth burdensome to them, and death terrible ; they are weary of

living, and afraid of dying. Thus overmuch sorrow swalloweth up.

III. Quest. What are the causes and cure of it?

Ans. With very many there is a great part of the cause in distemper, weakness, and disease of the body, and by it the soul is greatly disabled to any comfortable sense. But the more it ariseth from such natural necessity, it is the less sinful, and less dangerous to the soul, but never the less troublesome, but the more.

Three diseases cause overmuch sorrow.

1. Those that consist in such violent pain as natural strength is unable to bear; but this being usually not very long is not now to be chiefly spoken of.

2. A natural passionateness, and weakness of that reason that should quiet passion. It is too frequent a case with aged persons that are much debilitated to be very apt to offence and passion; and children cannot choose but cry when they are hurt; but it is most troublesome and hurtful to many women, (and some men,) who are so easily troubled, and hardly quieted, that they have very little power on themselves; even many who fear God, and who have very sound understandings, and quick wits, have almost no more power against troubling passions, anger, and grief, but especially fear, than they have of any other persons.

Their very natural temper is a strong disease of troubling, sorrow, fear, and displeasedness. They that are not melancholy, are yet of so childish, and sick, and impatient a temper, that one thing or other is still either discontenting, grieving, or affrighting them. They are like an aspen-leaf, still shaking with the least motion of the air. The wisest and most patient man cannot please and justify such a one; a word, yea, or a look, offendeth them; every sad story, or news, or noise, affrighteth them; and as children must have all that they cry for before they will be quiet, so is it with too many such. The case is very sad to those about them, but much more to themselves. To dwell with the sick in the house of mourning is less uncomfortable. But yet while reason is not overthrown, the case is not remediless, nor wholly excusable.

3. But when the brain and imagination are crazed, and reason partly overthrown by the disease called melancholy, this maketh the cure yet more difficult; for commonly it is the aforesaid persons, whose natural temper is timorous and passion-

ate, and apt to discontent and grief, who fall into crazedness and melancholy ; and the conjunction of both the natural temper and the disease does increase the misery.

The signs of such diseasing melancholy I have often elsewhere described. As,

1. The trouble and disquiet of the mind doth then become a settled habit ; they can see nothing but matter of fear and trouble. All that they hear or do doth feed it ; danger is still before their eyes ; all that they read and hear makes against them ; they can delight in nothing ; fearful dreams trouble them when they sleep, and distracted thoughts do keep them long waking ; it offends them to see another laugh, or be merry ; they think that every beggar's case is happier than theirs ; they will hardly believe that any one else is in their case, when some two or three in a week, or a day, come to me in the same case so like, that you would think it were the same person's case which they all express ; they have no pleasure in relations, friends, estate, or any thing ; they think that God hath forsaken them, and that the day of grace is past, and there is no more hope ; they say they cannot pray, but howl, and groan, and God will not hear them ; they will not believe that they have any sincerity and grace ; they say they cannot repent, they cannot believe, but that their hearts are utterly hardened. Usually they are afraid lest they have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost ; in a word, fears, and troubles, and almost despair, are the constant temper of their minds.

2. If you convince them that they have some evidences of sincerity, and that their fears are causeless and injurious to themselves, and unto God, and they have nothing to say against it, yet either it takes off none of their trouble, or else it returneth the next day ; for the cause remaineth in their bodily disease ; quiet them an hundred times, and their fears an hundred times return.

3. Their misery is, that what they think they cannot choose but think. You may almost as well persuade a man not to shake in an ague, or not to feel when he is pained, as persuade them to cast away their self-troubling thoughts, or not to think all the enormous, confounding thoughts as they do, they cannot get them out of their heads night or day. Tell them that they must forbear long musings, which disturb them, and they cannot. Tell them that they must cast out false imaginations out of their minds, when Satan casts them in, and must turn their thoughts

to something else, and they cannot do it. Their thoughts and troubles, and fears, are out of their power, and the more, by how much the more melancholy and crazed they are.

4. And when they are grown to this, usually they seem to feel something besides themselves, as it were, speak in them, and saying this and that to them, and bidding them to do this or that, and they will tell you now it saith this or that, and tell you when and what it hath said to them, and they will hardly believe how much of it is the disease of their own imagination.

5. In this case they are exceeding prone to think they have revelations; and whatever comes into their minds they think some revelation brought it thither. They use to say, this text of Scripture at such a time was set upon my mind, and that text at another time was set on my mind; when oft the sense that they took them in was false, or a false application of it made to themselves, and perhaps several texts applied to contrary conclusions, as if one gave them hope, and another contradicted it.

And some of them hereupon are very prone to prophecies, and verily believe that God hath foretold them this or that, till they see that it cometh not to pass, and then they are ashamed.

And many of them turn heretics, and take up errors in religion, believing verily that God believed them, and set such things upon their minds: and some of them that were long troubled, get quietness and joy by such changes of their opinions, thinking now that they are in God's way, which they were out of all this while, and therefore it was that they had no comfort. Of these I have known divers persons comforted that have fallen into the clean contrary opinions; some have turned papists, and superstitious, and some have run too far from papists, and some have had comforts by turning anabaptists, some antinomians, some contrary called arminians, some perfectionists, some quakers; and some have turned from Christianity itself to infidelity, and denied the life to come, and have lived in licentious uncleanness. But these melancholy heretics and apostates usually by this cast off their sadness, and are not the sort that I have now to deal with.

6. But the sadder, better sort, feeling this talk and stir within them, are often apt to be confident that they are possessed by the devil, or at least bewitched, of which I will say more anon.

7. And most of them are violently haunted with blasphem-

mous injections, at which they tremble, and yet cannot keep them out of their mind ; either they are tempted and haunted to doubt of the Scripture, or Christianity, or the life to come, or to think some ill of God ; and oftentimes they are strangely urged, as by something in them, to speak some blasphemous word of God, or to renounce him, and they tremble at the suggestion, and yet it still followeth them, and some poor souls yield to it, and say some bad word against God, and then, as soon as it is spoken, somewhat within them saith, ‘ Now, thy damnation is sealed, thou hast sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no hope.’

8. When it is far gone, they are tempted to lay some law upon themselves never to speak more, or not to eat, and some of them have famished themselves to death.

9. And when it is far gone, they often think that they have apparitions, and this and that likeness appeareth to them, especially lights in the night about their beds. And sometimes they are confident that they hear voices, and feel something touch or hurt them.

10. They fly from company, and can do nothing but sit alone and muse.

11. They cast off all business, and will not be brought to any diligent labour in their callings.

12. And when it cometh to extremity, they are weary of their lives, and strongly followed with temptations to make away with themselves, as if something within them were urging them either to drown themselves, or cut their own throats, or hang themselves, or cast themselves headlong, which, alas ! too many have done.

13. And if they escape this, when it is ripe, they become quite distracted.

These are the doleful symptoms and effects of melancholy ; and therefore how desirable is it to prevent them, or to be cured while it is but beginning, before they fall into so sad a state.

And here it is necessary that I answer the doubt whether such persons be possessed with the devil, or not ? And how much of all this aforesaid is from him.

And I must tell the melancholy person that is sincere, that the knowledge of the devil’s agency in his case, may be more to his comfort than to his despair.

And first, we must know what is meant by Satan’s possession, either of the body or the soul. It is not merely his local

presence and abode in a man that is called his possession, for we know little of that, how far he is more present with a bad man than a good, but it is his exercising power on a man by such a stated, effectual operation. As the Spirit of God is present with the worst, and maketh many holy motions to the souls of the impenitent, but he is a settled powerful agent in the soul of a believer, and so is said to dwell in such, and to possess them, by the habit of holiness and love; even so Satan maketh too frequent motions to the faithful, but he possesseth only the souls of the ungodly by predominant habits of unbelief and sensuality.

And so also he is permitted by God to inflict persecutions, and crosses, and ordinary diseases, on the just; but when he is God's executioner of extraordinary plagues, especially on the head, depriving men of sense and understanding, and working above the bare nature of the disease, this is called his possession.

And as most evil notions on the soul have Satan for their father, and our own hearts as the mothers, so most or many bodily diseases are by Satan, permitted by God, though there be causes of them also in the body itself. And when our own miscarriages, and humours, and the season, weather, and accidents, may be causes, yet Satan may, by these, be a superior cause.

And when his operations are such as we call a possession, yet he may work by means and bodily dispositions, and sometimes he worketh quite above the power of the disease itself, as when the unlearned speak in strange languages, and when bewitched persons vomit iron, glass, &c. And sometimes he doth only work by the disease itself, as in epilepsies, madness, &c.

From all this it is easy to gather, 1. That for Satan to possess the body is no certain sign of a graceless state, nor will this condemn the soul of any, if the soul itself be not possessed. Nay, there are few of God's children but it is like are sometime afflicted by Satan, as the executioner of God's correcting them, and sometime of God's trials, as in the case of Job; whatsoever some say to the contrary, it is likely that the prick in the flesh, which was Satan's messenger to buffet Paul, was some such pain as the stone which yet was not removed, that we find after thrice praying, but only he had a promise of sufficient grace.

2. Satan's possession of an ungodly soul is the miserable case, which is a thousand times worse than his possessing of the

body, but every corruption or sin is not such a possession, for no man is perfect without sin.

3. No sin proveth Satan's damnable possession of a man but that which he loveth more than he hateth it, and which he had rather keep than leave, and wilfully keepeth.

4. And this is matter of great comfort to such melancholy, honest souls, if they have but understanding to receive it, that of all men none love their sin which they groan under so little as they; yea, it is the heavy burden of their souls. Do you love your unbelief, your fears, your distracted thoughts, your temptations to blasphemy? Had you rather keep them than be delivered from them? The proud man, the ambitious, the fornicator, the drunkard, the gamester, the time-wasting gallants that sit out hours at cards, and plays, and idle chats, the gluttonous pleasures of the appetite, all these love their sins, and would not leave them; as Esau sold his birthright for one morsel, they will venture the loss of God, of Christ, and soul, and heaven, rather than leave a swinish sin. But is this your case? Do you so love your sad condition? You are weary of it, and heavy laden, and therefore are called to come to Christ for ease. (Matt. xi. 28, 29.)

5. And it is the devil's way, if he can, to haunt those with troubling temptations whom he cannot overcome with alluring and damning temptations. As he raiseth storms of persecution against them without, as soon as they are escaping from his deceits, so doth he trouble them within, as far as God permitteth him.

We deny not but Satan hath a great hand in the case of such melancholy persons, for,

1. His temptations caused the sin which God corrects them for.

2. His execution usually is a cause of the distemper of the body.

3. And, as a tempter, he is the cause of the sinful and troublesome thoughts, and doubts, and fears, and passions, which the melancholy causeth. The devil cannot do what he will with us, but what we give him advantage to do. He cannot break open our doors, but he can enter if we leave them open. He can easily tempt a heavy, phlegmatic body to sloth, a weak and choleric person to anger, a strong and sanguine man to lust, and one of a strong appetite to gluttony, or to drunkenness, and vain, sportful youth to idle plays, and gaming, and

voluptuousness, when, to others, such temptations would have small strength. And so, if he can cast you into melancholy, he can easily tempt you to overmuch sorrow and fear, and to distracting doubts and thoughts, and to murmur against God, and to despair, and still think that you are undone, undone; and even to blasphemous thoughts of God, or, if it take not this way, then to fanatic conceits of revelation, and a prophesying spirit.

6. But I add, that God will not impute his mere temptations to you, but to himself, be they ever so bad, as long as you receive them not by the will, but hate them; nor will he condemn you for those ill effects which are unavoidable from the power of a bodily disease, any more than he will condemn a man for raving thoughts, or words in a fever, frenzy, or utter madness. But so far as reason yet hath power, and the will can govern passions, it is your fault if you use not the power, though the difficulty make the fault the less.

II. But usually other causes go before this disease of melancholy, (except in some bodies naturally prone to it,) and therefore, before I speak of the cure of it, I will briefly touch them.

And one of the most common causes is sinful impatience, discontents, and cares, proceeding from a sinful love of some bodily interest, and from a want of sufficient submission to the will of God, and trust in him, and taking heaven for a satisfying portion.

I must necessarily use all these words to show the true nature of this complicated disease of souls. The names tell you that it is a conjunction of many sins, which in themselves are of no small malignity, and were they the predominant bent and habit of heart and life, they would be the signs of a graceless state, but while they are hated, and overcome not grace, but our heavenly portion is more esteemed, and chosen, and sought than earthly prosperity, the mercy of God, through Christ, doth pardon it, and will at last deliver us from all. But yet it beseemeth even a pardoned sinner to know the greatness of his sin, that he may not favour it, nor be unthankful for forgiveness.

I will therefore distinctly open the parts of this sin which bringeth many into dismal melancholy.

It is presupposed that God trieth his servants in this life with manifold afflictions, and Christ will have us bear the cross,

and follow him in submissive patience. Some are tried with painful diseases, and some with wrong by enemies, and some with the unkindness of friends, and some with froward, provoking relatives and company, and some with slanders, and some with persecution, and many with losses, disappointments, and poverty.

1. And here impatience is the beginning of the working of the sinful malady. Our natures are all too regardful of the interest of the flesh, and too weak in bearing heavy burdens; and poverty hath those trials which full and wealthy persons that feel them not, too little pity, especially in two cases.

1. When men have not themselves only, but wives and children in want, to quiet.

2. And when they are in debt to others, which is a heavy burden to an ingenuous mind, though thievish borrowers make too light of it. In these straits and trials, men are apt to be too sensible and impatient. When they and their families want food, and raiment, and fire, and other necessities to the body, and know not which way to get supply; when landlords, and butchers, and bakers, and other creditors, are calling for their debts, and they have it not to pay them, it is hard to keep all this from going too near the heart, and hard to bear it with obedient, quiet submission to God, especially for women, whose nature is weak, and liable to too much passion.

2. And this impatience turneth to a settled discontent and unquietness of spirit, which affecteth the body itself, and lieth all day as a load, or continual trouble at the heart.

3. And impatience and discontent do set the thoughts on the rack with grief and continual cares how to be eased of the troubling cause; they can scarce think of anything else, and these cares do even feed upon the heart, and are, to the mind, as a consuming fever to the body.

4. And the secret root or cause of all this is the worst part of the sin, which is, too much love to the body, and this world. Were nothing over-loved, it would have no power to torment us. If ease and health were not over-loved, pain and sickness would be the more tolerable; if children and friends were not over-loved, the death of them would not overwhelm us with inordinate sorrow; if the body were not over-loved, and worldly wealth and prosperity over-valued, it were easy to endure hard fare, and labour, and want, not only of superfluities and conveniences, but even of that which is necessary to health, yea,

or life itself, if God will have it so, at least, to avoid vexations, discontents, and cares, and inordinate grief and trouble of mind.

5. There is yet more sin in the root of all, and that is, it showeth that our wills are yet too selfish, and not subdued to a due submission to the will of God, but we would be as gods to ourselves, and be at our own choosing, and must needs have what the flesh desireth. We want a due resignation of ourselves and all our concerns to God, and live not as children, in due dependence on him for our daily bread, but must needs be the keepers of our own provision.

6. And this showeth that we be not sufficiently humbled for our sin, or else we should be thankful for the lowest state, as being much better than that which we deserved.

7. And there is apparently much distrust of God and unbelief in these troubling discontents and cares. Could we trust God as well as ourselves, or as we could trust a faithful friend, or as a child can trust his father, how quiet would our minds be in the sense of his wisdom, all-sufficiency, and love?

8. And this unbelief yet hath a worse effect than worldly trouble: it showeth that men take not the love of God and the heavenly glory for their sufficient portion, unless they may have what they want, or would have for the body in this world, unless they may be free from poverty, and crosses, and provocations, and injuries, and pains, all that God hath promised them here or hereafter, even everlasting glory, will not satisfy them; and when God, and Christ, and heaven, are not enough to quiet a man's mind, he is in great want of faith, hope, and love, which are far greater matters than food and raiment.

III. Another great cause of such trouble of mind is the guilt of some great and wilful sin; when conscience is convinced, and yet the soul is not converted, sin is beloved, and yet feared. God's wrath doth terrify them, and yet not enough to overcome their sin: some live in secret fraud and robbery, and many in drunkenness, in secret fleshly lusts, either self-pollution or fornication, and they know that for such things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; and yet the rage of appetite and lust prevailleth, and they despair and sin; and while the sparks of hell fall on their consciences, it changeth neither heart nor life: there is some more hope of the recovery of these than of dead-hearted or unbelieving sinners, who work uncleanness with greediness, and being past feeling, and blinded to defend their sins, and plead against holy obedience to God.

Brutishness is not so bad as diabolism and malignity : but none of these are the persons spoken of in my text ; their sorrow is not overmuch, but too little, as long as it will not restrain them from their sin.

But yet, if God convert these persons, the sins which they now live in may possibly hereafter plunge their souls into such depths of sorrow in the review, as may swallow them up.

And when men truly converted, yet dally with the bait, and renew the wounds of their consciences by their lapses, it is no wonder if their sorrow and terrors are renewed. Grievous sins have fastened so on the conscience of many, as have cast them into incurable melancholy and distraction.

IV. But, among people fearing God, there is yet another cause of melancholy, and of sorrowing overmuch, and that is ignorance and mistakes in matters which their peace and comfort are concerned in. I will name some particulars.

1. One is ignorance of the tenour of the gospel or covenant of grace, as some libertines, called Antinomians, more dangerously mistake it, who tell men that Christ hath repented and believed [for] them, and that they must no more question their faith and repentance, than they must question the righteousness of Christ ; so many better Christians understand not that the gospel is tidings of unspeakable joy to all that will believe it ; and that Christ and life are offered freely to them that will accept him, and that no sins, however great or many, are excepted from pardon, to the soul that unfeignedly turneth to God by faith in Christ ; and that whoever will may freely take the water of life, and all that are weary and athirst are invited to come to him for ease and rest.

And they seem not to understand the conditions of forgiveness, which is but true consent to the pardoning, saving (baptismal) covenant.

2. And many of them are mistaken about the use of sorrow for sin, and about the nature of hardness of heart : they think that if their sorrow be not so passionate as to bring forth tears, and greatly to afflict them, they are not capable of pardon, though they should consent to all the pardoning covenant ; and they consider not that it is not our sorrow for itself that God delighteth in, but it is the taking down of pride, and that so much humbling sense of sin, danger, and misery, as may make us feel the need of Christ and mercy, and bring us unfeignedly to consent to be his disciples, and to be saved upon his covenant terms

Be sorrow much or little, if it do this much the sinner shall be saved.

And as to the length of God's sorrow, some think that the pangs of the new birth must be a long-continued state; whereas we read in the Scripture, that, by the penitent sinners, the gospel was still received speedily with joy, as being the gift of Christ, and pardon, and everlasting life: humility and self-loathing must continue and increase, but our first great sorrows may be swallowed up with holy thankfulness and joy.

And as for hardness of heart, in Scripture, it is taken for such a stiff rebellious obstinacy, as will not be moved from their sins to obedience by any of God's commands or threats, and is called oft an iron sinew, a stiff neck, &c.; but it is never taken from the mere want of tears or passionate sorrow in a man that is willing to obey: the hard-hearted are the rebellious. Sorrow, even for sin, may be overmuch, and a passionate woman or man may easily grieve and weep for the sin which they will not leave, but obedience cannot be too much.

3. And abundance are cast down by ignorance of themselves, not knowing the sincerity which God hath given them. Grace is weak in the best of us here, and little and weak grace is not very easily perceived, for it acteth weakly and inconstantly, and it is known but by its acts; and weak grace is always joined with too strong corruption; and all sin in heart and life is contrary to grace, and doth obscure it; and such persons usually have too little knowledge, and are too strange at home, and unskilful in examining and watching their hearts, and keeping its accounts: and how can any, under all these hinderances, yet keep any full assurance of their own sincerity. If, with much ado, they get some assurances, neglect of duty, or coldness in it, or yielding to temptation, or inconstancy in close obedience, will make them question all again, and ready to say it was all but hypocrisy. And a sad and melancholy frame of mind is always apt to conclude the worst, and hardly brought to see any thing that is good, and tends to comfort.

4. And in such a case there are too few that know how to fetch comfort from bare probabilities, when they get not certainty, much less from the mere offers of grace and salvation, even when they cannot deny but they are willing to accept them; and if none should have comfort but those that have assurance of their sincerity and salvation, despair would swallow up the souls of most, even of true believers.

5. And ignorance of other men increaseth the fears and sorrows of some. They think, by our preaching and writing, that we are much better than we are : and then they think that they are graceless, because they come short of our supposed measures, whereas if they dwelt with us, and saw our failings, or knew us as well as we know ourselves, or saw all our sinful thoughts and vicious dispositions written in our foreheads, they would be cured of this error.

6. And unskilful teachers do cause the griefs and perplexities of very many. Some cannot open to them clearly the tenour of the covenant of grace : some are themselves unacquainted with any spiritual, heavenly consolations ; and many have no experience of any inward holiness, and renewal by the Holy Ghost, and know not what sincerity is, nor wherein a saint doth differ from an ungodly sinner, as wicked deceivers make good and bad to differ but a little, if not the best to be taken for the worst ; so some unskilful men do place sincerity in such things as are not so much as duty, as the papists in their manifold inventions and superstition, and many sects in their unsound opinions.

And some unskilfully and unsoundly describe the state of grace, and tell you how far an hypocrite may go, so as unjustly discourageth and confoundeth the weaker sort of Christians, and cannot amend the mis-expression of their books or teachers ;* and too many teachers lay men's comforts, if not salvation, on controversies which are past their reach, and pronounce heresy and damnation against that which they themselves understand not. Even the Christian world, these one thousand three hundred, or one thousand two hundred, years, is divided into parties by the teachers' unskilful quarrels about words which they took in several senses. Is it any wonder if the hearers of such are distracted ?

IV. I have told you the causes of distracted sorrows, I am now to tell you what is the cure ; but, alas ! it is not so soon done as told ; and I shall begin where the disease beginneth, and tell you both what the patient himself must do, and what must be done by his friends and teachers.

I. Look not on the sinful part of your troubles, either as better or worse than indeed it is.

1. Too many persons in their sufferings and sorrows think

* One of my hearers fell distracted with reading some passages in Mr. Shepherd's *Sincere Believer*, which were not justifiable or sound.

they are only to be pitied, and take little notice of the sin that caused them, or they still continue to commit; and too many unskilful friends and ministers do only comfort them, when a round chiding and discovery of their sin should be the better part of the cure; and if they were more sensible how much sin there is, in their overvaluing the world, and not trusting God, and in their hard thoughts of him, and their poor, unholy thoughts of his goodness, and in their undervaluing the heavenly glory, which should satisfy them in the most afflicted state, and in their daily impatiences, cares, and discontents, and in denying the mercies or graces received, this would do more to cure some than words of comfort, when they say as Jonah, "I do well to be angry," and think that all their denials of grace, and distracting sorrows and wrangling against God's love and mercy, are their duties, it is time to make them know how great sinners they are.

2. And yet when as foolishly they think that all these sins are marks of a graceless state, and that God will take the devil's temptations for their sins, and condemn them for that which they abhor, and take their very disease of melancholy for a crime, this also needs confutation and reprehension, that they may not by error cherish their passions or distress.

II. Particularly, give not way to a habit of peevish impatience! though it is carnal love to somewhat more than to God and glory which is the damning sin, yet impatience must not pass for ignorance. Did you not reckon upon sufferings, and of bearing the cross, when you first gave up yourselves to Christ? And do you think it strange? Look for it, and make it your daily study to prepare for any trial that God may bring you to, and then it will not surprise you, and overwhelm you. Prepare for the loss of children and friends, for the loss of goods, and for poverty and want; prepare for slanders, injuries, or poisons, for sickness, pain, and death. It is your unpreparedness that maketh it seem unsufferable.

And remember that it is but a vile body that suffereth, which you always knew must suffer death, and rot to dust; and whoever is the instrument of your sufferings, it is God that trieth you by it, and when you think that you are only displeased with men, you are not guiltless of murmuring against God, or else his overruling hand would persuade you to submissive patience.

Especially make conscience of a settled discontent of mind.

Have you not yet much better than you deserve? And do you forget how many years you have enjoyed undeserving mercy? Discontent is a continued resistance of God's disposing will, that I say not some rebellion against it. Your own wills rise up against the will of God. It is atheistical to think that your sufferings are not by his providence; and dare you repine against God, and continue in such repining? To whom else doth it belong to dispose of you and all the world?

And when you feel distracting cares for your deliverances, remember that this is not trusting God. Care for your own duty, and obey his command, but leave it to him what you shall have; tormenting cares do but add to your afflictions; it is a great mercy of God that he forbiddeth you these cares, and promiseth to care for you. Your Saviour himself hath largely, though gently, reprehended them, (Matt. vi.,) and told you how sinful and unprofitable they are, and that your Father knoweth what you need; and if he deny it you, it is for just cause, and if it be to correct you, it is yet to profit you; and if you submit to him, and accept his gift, he will give you much better than that which he taketh from you, even Christ and everlasting life.

III. Set yourselves more diligently than ever to overcome the inordinate love of the world. It will be a happy use of all your troubles if you can follow them up to the fountain, and find out what it is that you cannot bear the want or loss of, and consequently what is it that you over-love. God is very jealous, even when he loveth, against every idol that is loved too much, and with any of that love which is due to him. And if he take them all away, and tear them out of our hands and hearts, it is merciful as well as just. I speak not this to those that are troubled only for want of more faith, and holiness, and communion with God, and assurance of salvation. These troubles might give them much comfort if they understood aright from whence they come, and what they signify. For as impatient trouble under worldly crosses doth prove that a man loveth the world too much, so impatient trouble, for want of more holiness and communion with God, doth show that such are lovers of holiness and of God. Love goeth before desire and grief. That which men love they delight in if they have it, and mourn for want of it, and desire to obtain it. The will is the love; and no man is troubled for want of that which he would not have.

But the commonest cause of passionate melancholy is at first

some worldly discontent and care ; either wants or crosses, or the fear of suffering, or the unsuitableness and provocation of some related to them, or disgrace, or contempt, do cast them into passionate discontent, and self-will cannot bear the denial of something which they would have, and then when the discontent hath muddled and diseased a man's mind, temptations about his soul do come in afterwards ; and that which begun only with worldly crosses, doth after seem to be all about religion, conscience, or merely for sin and want of grace.

Why could you not patiently bear the words, the wrongs, the losses, the crosses, that did befall you ? Why made you so great a matter of these bodily, transitory things ? Is it not because you over-loved them ? Were you not in good earnest when you called them vanity, and covenanted to leave them to the will of God ? Would you have God let you alone in so great a sin as the love of the world, or giving any of his due to creatures. If God should not teach you what to love, and what to set light by, and cure you of so dangerous a disease as a fleshly, earthly mind, he should not sanctify you, and fit you for heaven. Souls go not to heaven as an arrow is shot upward, against their inclination ; but as fire naturally tendeth upward, and earth downward, to their like, so when holy men are dead, their souls have a natural inclination upward ; and it is their love that is their inclination ; they love God and heaven, and holy company, and their old godly friends, and holy works, even mutual love, and the joyful praises of Jehovah. And this spirit and love is as a fiery nature, which carrieth them heavenward ; and angels convey them not thither by force, but conduct them as a bride to her marriage, who is carried all the way by love.

And on the other side, the souls of wicked men are of a fleshly, worldly inclination, and love not heavenly works and company, and have nothing in them to carry them to God ; but they love worldly trash, and sensual, bestial delights, though they cannot enjoy them ; and as poor men love riches, and are vexed for want of what they love ; and therefore it is no wonder if wicked souls do dwell with devils in the lower regions, and that they make apparitions here when God permits them, and if holy souls be liable to no such descent. Love is the soul's poise and spring, and carrieth souls downward or upward accordingly.

Away, then, with the earthly, fleshly love. How long will you

stay here ; and what will earth and flesh do for you ? So far as it may be helpful to holiness and heaven, God will not deny it to submissive children ; but to over-love is to turn from God, and is the dangerous malady of souls, and the poise that sinks them down from heaven. Had you learnt better to forsake all for Christ, and to account all but as loss and dung, as Paul did, (Phil. iii. 8,) you could more easily bear the want of it. When did you see any live in discontent, and distracted with melancholy, grief, and cares, for want of dung, or of a bubble, a shadow, or a merry dream ? If you will not otherwise know the world, God will otherwise make you know it to your sorrow.

IV. If you are not satisfied that God alone, Christ alone, heaven alone is enough for you, as matter of felicity and full content, go, study the case better, and you may be convinced. Go, learn better your catechism, and the principles of religion, and then you will learn to lay up a treasure in heaven, and not on earth, and to know that it is best to be with Christ ; and that death, which blasteth all the glory of the world, and equalleth rich and poor, is the common door to heaven or hell ; and then conscience will not ask you whether you have lived in pleasure, or in pain ; in riches, or in want ; but whether you have lived to God, or to the flesh ; for heaven or for earth ? and what hath had the pre-eminence in your hearts and lives ? If there be shame in heaven, you will be ashamed when you are there, that you whined and murmured for want of any thing that the flesh desired upon earth, and went thither grieving because your bodies suffered here. Study more to live by faith on hope, on the unseen promised glory with Christ, and you will patiently endure any sufferings in the way.

V. And study better how great a sin it is to set our own wills and desires in a discontented opposition to the wisdom, will, and providence of God ; and to make our wills instead of His, as gods to ourselves. Does not a murmuring heart secretly accuse God ? All accusation of God hath some degree of blasphemy in it. For the accuser supposeth that somewhat of God is to be blamed, and if you dare not open your mouths to accuse him, let not the repinings of your hearts accuse him ; know how much of religion and holiness consisteth in bringing this rebellious self-will to a full resignation, submission, and conformity to the will of God. Till you can rest in God's will you will never have rest.

VI. And study well how great a duty it is wholly to trust God, and our blessed Redeemer, both with soul and body, and all we have. Is not infinite power; wisdom, and goodness, to be trusted? Is not a Saviour, who came from heaven into flesh, to save sinners by such incomprehensible ways of love, to be trusted with that which he hath so dearly bought? To whom else will you trust? Is it to yourselves or your friends? Who is it that hath kept you all your lives, and done all for you that is done? Who is it that hath saved all the souls that are now in heaven? What is our Christianity but a life of faith? And is this your aith, to distract yourselves with care and troubles, if God do not fit all his providences to your wills? Seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and he hath promised that all other things shall be added to you, and not a hair of your head shall perish, for they are all, as it were, numbered. A sparrow falls not to the ground without his providence, and doth he set less by those that fain would please him? Believe God, and trust him, and your cares, and fears, and griefs will vanish.

O that you knew what a mercy and comfort it is for God to make it your duty to trust him! If he had made you no promise, this is equal to a promise. If he do but bid you trust him, you may be sure he will not deceive your trust. If a faithful and confidential friend, that is able to relieve you, do but bid you trust in him for your relief, you will not think that he will deceive you. Alas! I have friends that durst trust me with their estates, and lives, and souls, if they were in my power, and would not fear that I would destroy or hurt them, that yet cannot trust the God of infinite goodness with them, though he both commands them to trust him, and promises that he will never fail them, nor forsake them. It is the refuge of my soul that quieteth me in my fears, that God, my Father and Redeemer, hath commanded me to trust him with my body, my health, my liberty, my estate, and when eternity seemeth strange and dreadful to me, that he bids me trust him with my departing soul! Heaven and earth are upheld and maintained by him, and shall I distrust him?

Objection.—But it is none but his children that he will save.

Answer.—True; and all are his children that are truly willing to obey and please him. If you are truly willing to be holy, and to obey his commanding will, in a godly, righteous, and sober life, you may boldly rest in his disposing will, and

rejoice in his rewarding and accepting will, for he will pardon all our infirmities through the merits and intercession of Christ.

VII. If you would not be swallowed up with sorrow, swallow not the baits of sinful pleasure. Passions, and dulness, and defective duties have their degrees of guilt, but it is pleasing sin that is the dangerous and deep-wounding sin. O fly from the baits of lust, and pride, and ambition, and covetousness, and an unruly appetite to drink or meat, as you would fly from guilt, and grief, and terror. The more pleasure you have in sin, usually the more sorrow it will bring you; and the more you know it to be sin, and conscience tells you that God is against it, and yet you will go on, and bear down conscience, the sharper will conscience afterwards afflict you, and the more hardly will it be quieted when it is awakened to repentance. Yea, when an humbled soul is pardoned by grace, and believeth that he is pardoned, he will not easily forgive himself. The remembrance of the wilfulness of sinning, and how poor a bait prevailed with us, and what mercies and motives we bore down, will make us so displeased and angry with ourselves, and so to loathe such naughty hearts as will not admit a speedy or easy reconciliation. Yea, when we remember that we sinned against knowledge, even when we remembered that God did see us, and that we offended him, it will keep up long doubts of our sincerity in the soul, and make us afraid lest still we have the same hearts, and should again do the same if we had the same temptations. Never look for joy or peace as long as you live in wilful and beloved sin. This thorn must be taken out of your hearts before you will be eased of the pain, unless God leave you to a senseless heart, and Satan give you a deceitful peace, which doth but prepare for greater sorrow.

VIII. But if none of the forementioned sins cause your sorrows, but they come from the mere perplexities of your mind about religion, or the state of your souls, as fearing God's wrath for your former sins, or doubting of your sincerity and salvation, then these foregoing reproofs are not meant to such as you, but I shall now lay you down your proper remedy, and that is, the cure of that ignorance and those errors which cause your troubles.

1. Many are perplexed about controversies in religion, while every contending party is confident, and hath a great deal to say, which to the ignorant seemeth like to truth, and which the hearer cannot answer, and when each party tells them that

their way is the only way, and threateneth damnation to them if they turn not to them. The papists say, 'There is no salvation out of our church;' that is, to none but the subjects of the bishop of Rome. The Greeks condemn them, and extol their church, and every party extols their own. Yea, some will convert them with fire and sword, and say, 'Be of our church, or lie in gaol;' or make their church itself a prison, by driving in the incapable and unwilling.

Among all these, how shall the ignorant know what to choose?

Answer.—The case is sad, and yet not so sad as the case of the far greatest part of the world, who are quite in heathenism, or infidelity, or never trouble themselves about religion, but follow the customs of their countries, and the prince's laws, that they may not suffer. It is some sign of a regard to God and your salvation, that you are troubled about religion, and careful to know which is the right; even controversy is better than atheistical indifference, that will be on the upper side, be it what it will. If you cast acorns or pulse among them, swine will strive for it; or if it be carrion, dogs will fight for it; but if it be gold or jewels, dogs and swine will never strive for them, but tread them in the dirt. But cast them before men, and they will be altogether by the ears for them. Lawyers contend about law, and princes about dominion, which others mind not, and religious persons strive about religion, and what wonder is this? It doth but show that they value their souls and religion, and that their understandings are yet imperfect. But if you follow these plain directions, controversies need not break your peace.

I. See that you be true to the light and law of nature, which all mankind is obliged to observe. If you had no Scripture nor Christianity, nature (that is, the works of God,) do tell you that there is a God, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. It tells you that God is absolutely perfect in power, knowledge, and goodness, and that man is a reasonable, free agent made by him, and therefore is his own, and at his will and government. It tells you that a man's actions are not indifferent, but some things we ought to do, and some things we ought not to do, and that virtue and vice, moral good and evil, do greatly differ, and therefore that there is some universal law which obligeth us to the good, and forbids the evil, and that this can be none but the law of the universal go-

vernor, which is God. It tells all men that they owe this God their absolute obedience, because he is their most wise and absolute ruler, and that they owe him their chiefest love, because he is not only the chief benefactor, but also most perfectly amiable in himself. It tells us that he hath made us all sociable members of one world, and that we owe love and help to one another. It tells us that all this obedience to God can never be in vain, nor to our loss ; and it tells us that we must all die, and that fleshly pleasures and this transitory world will quickly leave us. There is no more cause to doubt of all, or any of this, than whether man be man. Be true to this much, and it will be a great help to all the rest.

II. And as to God's supernatural revelation, hold to God's word, the sacred bible, written by the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as the sufficient records of it.

It is not divine faith if it rest not on divine revelation, nor is it divine obedience which is not given to divine government or command. Man's word is to be believed but as it deserveth, with a human faith, and man's law must be obeyed according to the measure of his authority, with a human obedience, but these are far different from a divine. There is no universal ruler of all the world or church but God ; no man is capable of it, nor any council of men. God's law is only in nature, and in the holy Scripture, and that being the law by which he will judge us, it is the law which is the only divine rule of our faith or judgment, our hearts and lives. Though all in the Scripture is not of equal clearness or necessity, but a man may be saved that understandeth not a thousand sentences therein, yet all that is necessary to salvation is plainly there contained, and God's law is perfect in its designed use, and needeth no supplement of man's. Hold close to Scripture sufficiency, or you will never know what to hold to. Councils and canons are far more uncertain, and there is no agreement among their subjects which of them are obligatory, and which not, nor any possible way to come to an agreement.

III. Yet use with thankfulness the help of men, for the understanding and obeying the word of God.

Though lawyers, as such, have none of the legislative power, you need their help to understand the use of the law aright. And though no men have power to make laws for the church universal, yet men must be our teachers to understand and use the laws of God. We are not born with faith or knowledge ;

we know nothing but what is taught us, except what sense or intuition perceiveth, or reason gathereth from thence.

If you ask, Who must we learn of? I answer, of those that know, and have learned themselves. No name, or title, or relation, or habit, will enable any man to teach you that which he knoweth not himself.

1. Children must learn of their parents and tutors.

2. People must learn of their able, faithful pastors and catechisers.

3. All Christians must be teachers by charitable helps to one another.

But teaching and law-making are two things. To teach another is but to show him that same scientific evidence of truth, by which the teacher knoweth it himself, that the learner may know it as he doth. To say, 'You shall believe that is true which I say is true, and that this is the meaning of it,' is not teaching, but law-giving, and to believe such an one, is not to learn or know, though some human belief of our teachers is necessary to learners.

IV. Take nothing as necessary to the being of Christianity and to salvation, which is not recorded in Scripture, and hath not been held necessary by all true Christians in every age and place.

Not that we must know men first to be true Christians, that by them we may know what christian truth is, but the plain Scripture tells all men what Christianity is, and by that we know whom to take for Christians. But if anything be new, and risen since the apostles' writing of the Scripture, that can be no point essential to Christianity, else Christianity must be a mutable thing, and not the same now as it was heretofore, or else there were no Christians before this novelty in the world. The church were not the church, nor were any man Christian, if they wanted any essential part of faith or practice.

But here take heed of sophist's deceit; though nothing is necessary to salvation but all sound Christians have still believed, yet it is not necessary, or true, or good, which all good Christians have believed or done; much less all which the tempted worse part have held: for though the essence of Christianity has been ever and everywhere the same, yet the opinions of Christians, and their mistakes and faults, have been none of their imitable faith or practice. Human nature is essentially the same in Adam, and in all men, but the diseases of nature are another thing. If all men have sin and error, so have all

churches ; their Christianity is of God, but the corruptions and maladies of Christians are not. You must hold nothing but what Christians of old have held as received from God's word ; but because they have all some faults and errors, you must not hold and do all those.

V. Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace with all true christians as such, and live in love in the communion of saints.

That is, with them that live in the belief, and in holy obedience to the christian faith and law. By their fruits you shall know them. The societies of malignants, who suppress true practical knowledge and piety, and hate the best men, and cherish wickedness, and bloodily persecute those that in conscience obey not their usurpations and inventions, are not the communion of saints ; wolves, thorns, and thistles, are not the sheep or vines of Christ.

VI. Prefer not any odd or singular sect before the universal consent of the faithful in your learning or communion, so far as the judgment of men is to be regarded.

Though we take not our faith from the number of believers, and though the most be usually none of the best, and some few are much wiser than the most, and in a controversy, a few men of such knowledge are to be believed before the multitude of less knowledge, yet Christ is the head of all true Christians, and not of an odd sect or party only ; and he hath commanded them all to live as brethren, in love and holy communion ; and in all sciences, the greater number of agreeing men are liker to be in the right, than some straggling persons, who show otherwise no more ability than they : at least, which side soever you like best in less necessary points, you must always be in unity with all true Christians, and not unnecessarily differ from them.

VII. Never set a doubtful opinion against a certain truth or duty ; reduce not things certain to things uncertain ; but contrarily, uncertain things to certain : for instance, it is certain that you ought to live in love and peace with all that are true Christians, and to do good to all, and wrong to none ; let not any doubtful difference make you violate this rule, and hate, and slander, and backbite, and hurt them for a doubtful, indifferent, or unnecessary thing ; set not your mint or cummin, tythes or ceremonies, against love and justice, and the great and certain things of the law ; it is an ill sect or opinion that is against the nature and common duty of Christianity and humanity.

VIII. Faithfully serve Christ as far as you have attained, and be true to all the truth that you know; sin not by omission or practice against the knowledge which you have, lest God in justice give up your understanding to believe a lie.

IX. Remember that all men on earth are ignorant, and know but as in a glass, and in part, and therefore the best have many errors; no man knoweth the smallest grass or worm with an adequate perfect knowledge. And if God bear with multitudes of errors in us all, we must bear with such as are tolerable in each other; it is well if men be humble, and teachable, and willing to know. As we have seen few more imperfect than the sects that have asserted sinless perfection, so we see few so fallible and erroneous as the Roman sect, which pleadeth their infallibility; when they tell you that you must believe their popes and councils, that you may come to an end of controversy, ask them whether we may here hope for any end of ignorance, error, and sin; if not, what hope of ending all controversies before we come to heaven, where ignorance is ended? The controversies against the essentials of Christianity were ended with us all when we became true and adult Christians, and the rest will be lessened as we grow in knowledge. Divinity is not less mysterious than law and physic, &c., where controversies abound.

X. Yet stint not yourselves in knowledge, nor say 'We have learned enough,' but continue as Christ's scholars in learning more and more to the death; the wisest know little, and may still increase. There is a great difference in excellency, usefulness, and comfort, between men of clear, digested knowledge, and confused undigested apprehensions.

These ten rules practised, will save you from being perplexed with doubts and controversies of all pretenders in religion.

II. But if your trouble be not about doctrinal controversies, but about your sins, or want of grace, and spiritual state, digest well these following truths and councils, and it will cure you.

I. God's goodness is equal to his greatness; even to that power that ruleth heaven and earth. His attributes are commensurate: and goodness will do good to capable receivers. He loved us when we were enemies; and he is, essentially, love itself.

II. Christ hath freely taken human nature, and made satisfaction for the sins of the world, as full as answereth his ends, and so full that none shall perish for want of sufficiency in his sacrifice and merits.

III. Upon these merits Christ hath made a law, or covenant of grace, forgiving all sin, and giving freely everlasting life to all that will believingly accept it; so that all men's sins are conditionally pardoned by the tenour of this covenant.

IV. The condition of pardon and life is not that we sin no more, or that by any price we purchase it of God, or by our own works do benefit him; or buy his grace; but only that we believe him, and willingly accept of the mercy which he freely giveth us, according to the nature of the gift; that is, that we accept of Christ as Christ, to justify, sanctify, rule, and save us.

V. God hath commissioned his ministers to proclaim and offer this covenant and grace to all, and earnestly entreat them in his name to accept it, and be reconciled to him; he hath excepted none.

VI. No man that hath this offer is damned, but only those that obstinately refuse it to the last breath.

VII. The day of grace is never so passed to any sinner but still he may have Christ and pardon if he will; and if he have it not, it is because he will not. And the day of grace is so far from being passed, that it is savingly come to all that are so willing; and grace is still offered urgently to all.

VIII. The will is the man in God's account, and what a man truly would be and have, he is, and shall have: consent to the baptismal covenant is true grace and conversion, and such have right to Christ and life.

IX. The number and greatness of former sins is no exception against the pardon of any penitent, converted sinner: God pardoneth great and small to such; where sin aboundeth, grace superaboundeth? and much is forgiven, that men may be thankful, and love much.

X. Repentance is true, though tears and passionate sorrow be defective, when a man had rather leave his sin than keep it, and sincerely, though imperfectly, endeavoureth fully to overcome it; no sin shall damn a man which he more hateth than loveth, and had truly rather leave than keep, and sheweth this by true endeavour.

XI. The best man hath much evil, and the worst have some good; but it is that which is preferred, and predominant in the will, which distinguisheth the godly and the wicked. He that in estimation, choice, and life, prefereth God, and heaven, and holiness, before the world, and the pleasure of sin, is a true godly man, and shall be saved.

XII. The best have daily need of pardon, even for the faultiness of their holiest duties, and must daily live on Christ for pardon.

XIII. Even sin against knowledge and conscience are too oft committed by regenerate men ; for they know more than others do, and their consciences are more active ; happy were they indeed if they could be as good as they know they should be, and love God as much as they know they should love him, and were clear from all the relicts of passion and unbelief, which conscience tells them are their sins.

XIV. God will not take Satan's temptations to be our sins, but only our not resisting them. Christ himself was tempted to the most heinous sin, even to fall down to the devil and worship him ; God will charge Satan's blasphemous temptations on himself alone.

XV. The thoughts, and fears, and troubles, which melancholy and natural weakness and distemper irresistibly cause, hath much more of bodily disease than of sin, and, therefore, is of the least of sins ; and, indeed, no more sin than to burn or be thirsty in a fever, further than as some sin did cause the disease that causeth it, or further than there is left some power in reason to resist them.

XVI. Certainty of our faith and sincerity is not necessary to salvation, but the sincerity of faith itself is necessary. He shall be saved that giveth up himself to Christ, though he know not that he is sincere in doing it. Christ knoweth his own grace, when they that have it know not that it is sound. It is but few true Christians that attain to certainty of salvation ; for weak grace clogged with much corruption is hardly known, and usually joined with fear and doubting.

XVII. Probability of sincerity and trust in Christ may cause a man, justly, to live and die in peace and comfort, without proper certainty, else few Christians should live and die in peace ; and yet we see by experience that many do so. The common opinion of most church-writers for four hundred years after Christ, was, that the uncontinued sort of Christians might fall from a state of grace, in which, had they continued, they had been saved, and, therefore, that none but strong confirmed Christians, at most, could be certain of salvation ; and many protestant churches still are of that mind, and yet they live not in despair or terror. No man is certain that he shall not fall as heinously as David and Peter did ; and yet while they have no cause to think it likely, they need not live in terror for the un-

certainty. No wife or child is certain that the husband or father will not murder them, and yet they may live comfortably, and not fear it.

XVIII. Though faith be so weak, as to assault with doubts whether the gospel be true, and there be any life to come ; and though our trust in Christ be not strong enough to banish our fears and troubles, yet if we see so much evidence of credibility in the gospel, and probability of a better life hereafter, as causeth us here to fix our hopes and choice, and to resolve for those hopes to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and let go all the world rather than sell those hopes, and live a holy life to obtain it, this faith will save us.

XIX. But God's love and promise through Christ is so sure a ground for faith and comfort, that it is the great duty and interest of all men, confidently and quietly, to trust him, and then to live in the joy of holy trust and hope.

XX. If any man doubt of his salvation because of the greatness of his sins, the way to quietness is presently to be willing to forsake them. Either he that complaineth is willing to be holy and forsake his sins, or not ; if you be not willing to leave them, but love them, and would keep them, why do you complain of them, and mourn for that which you so much love ? If your child should cry and roar because his apple is sour, and yet will not be persuaded to forbear to eat it, you would not pity him, but whip him, as perverse. But if you are truly willing to leave it, you are already saved from its damning guilt.

XXI. If you are in doubt of the sincerity of your faith, and other graces, and all your examination leaveth you uncertain, the way is presently to end your doubt by actual giving up yourself to Christ. Do you not know whether you have been hitherto a true believer ? You may know that Christ is now offered to you ; consent but to the covenant, and accept the offer, and you may be sure that he is yours.

XXII. Bare examining is not always to be done for assurance, but labour to excite and exercise much the grace that you would be assured of ; the way to be sure that you believe and love God, is to study the promises and goodness of God, till active faith assure you that you believe, and you love God and glory, till you are assured that you love them.

XXIII. It is not by some extraordinary act, good or bad, that we may be sure what state the soul is in, but by the predominant bent, and drift, and tenour of heart and life.

XXIV. Though we cry out that we cannot believe, and we cannot love God, and we cannot pray aright, Christ can help us ; without his grace we can do nothing ; but his grace is sufficient for us, and he denieth not his further help when once he hath made us willing, but hath bid us ask and have ; and if any lack wisdom let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not with former folly, but gives his spirit to them that ask him.

XXV. This sin, called the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, is the sin of no one that believeth Jesus to be the Christ, nor of any that fear it, no, nor of every infidel, but only of some few obstinate, unbelieving enemies, for it is only this : when men see such miracles of Christ and his Spirit as should or could convince them that he is of God, and when they have no other shift, they will rather maintain that he is a conjurer, and wrought them by the devil.

XXVI. Though sinful fear is very troublesome, and not to be cherished, God often permitteth and useth it to good, to keep us from being bold with sin, and from those sinful pleasures and love of the world, and presumption, and security, which are far more dangerous, and to take down pride, and keep us in a sensible, watchful state ; for just fear is made to preserve us from the hurt and danger feared.

XXVII. He that goeth fearing and trembling to heaven, will there quickly be past all fear, and doubts, and heaviness, for ever.

XXVIII. When Christ for our sins was in his agony, and when he cried out, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” he was then nevertheless beloved of his father ; and he was tempted that he might succour them that are tempted, and suffered such derision that he might be a compassionate high priest to sufferers.

XXIX. By how much the more the troubles, and blasphemous temptations, and doubts, and fears, of a man are grievous, displeasing, and hateful to him, by so much the more he may be assured that they shall not condemn him, because they are not beloved sins.

XXX. All our troubles are over-ruled by God ; and it is far better for us to be at his choice and disposal than our own, or our dearest friend’s ; and he hath promised that all things shall work together for our good. (Rom. viii. 28.)

XXXI. A delight in God and goodness, and a joyful, praising frame of soul, from the belief of the love of God through

Christ, is far more to be desired than grief and tears, which do but sweep away some dirt, that love, joy, and thankfulness may enter, which are the true evangelical, christian temper, and likeliest to the heavenly state.

Digest these truths, and they will cure you.

III. But if melancholy have got head already, there must be, besides what is said, some other and proper remedies used ; and the difficulty is great, because the disease makes them self-conceited, unreasonable, wilful, and unruly, and they will hardly be persuaded that the disease is in their bodies, but only in the souls, and will not believe but they have reason for all what they think and do ; or, if they confess the contrary, they plead disability, and say, ' We can think and do no otherwise than we do.'

But supposing that there is some use of reason left, I will give them yet some further counsel ; and what they cannot do, their friends must help them to their power, which I shall add.

1. Consider that it should be easy for you in your confounding, troubling thoughts, to perceive that your understandings are not now so sound and strong as other men's ; and therefore be not wilful and self-conceited, and think not that your thoughts are righter than theirs, but believe wiser men, and be ruled by them.

Answer me this question, Do you know any minister, or friend, that is wiser than yourself ? If you say no, how foolishly proud are you ! If you say yea, then ask the minister, or friend, what he thinketh of your condition, and believe him, and be ruled by him rather than by your crazed self.

2. Do you find that your troubles do you more good or hurt ? Do they make you fitter or unfitter to believe and love God, and rejoice in him, and praise him ? If you feel that they are against all that is good, you may be sure that they are so far from the devil's temptations, and are pleasing to him ; and will you cherish or plead for the work of Satan, which you find is against yourselves and God ?

3. Avoid your musings, and exercise not your thoughts now too deeply, nor too much. Long meditation is a duty to some, but not to you, no more than it is a man's duty to go to church that hath his leg broken, or his foot out of joint : he must rest and ease it till it be set again, and strengthened. You may live in the faith and fear of God, without setting yourself to deep, disturbing thoughts.

Those that will not obey this counsel, their friends must rouse them from their melancholy musings, and call them off to something else.

4. Therefore you must not be much alone, but always in some pleasing, cheerful company : solitariness doth but cherish musings.

Nor must such be long in secret prayer, but more in public prayer with others.

5. Let those thoughts which you have be laid out on the most excellent things : pore not all on yourselves, and on your dis-tempered hearts ; the best may find there much matter of trouble. As millstones wear themselves if they go when they have no corn, so do the thoughts of such as think not of better things than their own hearts. If you have any power of your own thoughts, force them to think most of these four things :

1. The infinite goodness of God, who is fuller of love than the sun is of light.

2. Of the unmeasurable love of Christ in man's redemption, and of the sufficiency of his sacrifice and merits.

3. Of the free covenant and offer of grace, which giveth pardon and life to all that do not prefer the pleasure of sin before it, and obstinately refuse it to the last.

4. Of the inconceivable glory and joy which all the blessed have with Christ, and which God hath promised with his oath and seal, to all that consent to the covenant of grace, and are willing to be saved and ruled by Christ. These thoughts will cure melancholy fears.

5. Use not yourselves to a complaining talk, but talk most of the great mercies of God which you have received. Dare you deny them ? If not, are they not more worthy of your discourse than your present sufferings ? Let not all men know that you are in your troubles : complaining doth but feed them, and it discourageth others. Open them to none but your secret counsellors and friends. Use much to speak of the love of God, and the riches of grace, and it will divert and sweeten your sourer thoughts.

6. Especially, when you pray, resolve to spend most of your time in thanksgiving and praise to God. If you cannot do it with the joy that you should, yet do it as you can. You have not the power of your comforts ; but have you no power of your tongues ? Say not that you are unfit for thanks and praises, unless you had a praising heart, and were the children of God ;

for every man, good and bad, is bound to praise God, and to be thankful for all that he hath received, and to do it, as well as he can, rather than leave it undone: and most Christians want assurance of their adoption; and must they, therefore, forbear all praise and thanksgiving to God? Doing it as you can is the way to be able to do it better. Thanksgiving stirreth up thankfulness in the heart, but by your objection you may perceive what the devil driveth at, and gets by your melancholy. He would turn you off from all thankfulness to God, and from the very mention of his love and goodness in your praises.

7. When vexatious or blasphemous thoughts are thrust into your mind by Satan, neither give them entertainment, nor yet be overmuch troubled at them; first, use that reason and power that is left you resolutely to cast them out, and turn your thoughts to somewhat else; do not say, 'I cannot.' If you can no otherwise command and turn away your thoughts, rise up and go into some company or to some employment which will divert you, and take them up. Tell me what you would do if you heard a scold in the street reviling you, or heard an atheist there talk against God, would you stand still to hear them, or would you talk it out again with them, or rather go from them, and disdain to hear them, or debate the case with such as they? Do you, in your case, when Satan casts in ugly, or despairing, or murmuring thoughts, go away from them to some other thoughts or business.

If you cannot do this of yourself, tell your friend when the temptation cometh; and it is his duty who hath the care of you to divert you with some other talk or works, or force you into diverting company.

Yet be not too much troubled at the temptation, for trouble of mind doth keep the evil matter in your memory, and so increase it, as pain of a sore draws the blood and spirits to the place. And this is the design of Satan, to give you troubling thoughts, and then to cause more by being troubled at those; and so, for one thought and trouble to cause another, and that another, and so on, as waves in the sea do follow each other. To be tempted is common to the best. I told you to what idolatry Christ was tempted. When you feel such thoughts, thank God that Satan cannot force you to love them, or consent.

8. Again, still remember what a comfortable evidence you carry about with you that your sin is not damning, while you feel that you love it not, but hate it, and are weary of it. Scarce

any sort of sinners have so little pleasure in their sin as the melancholy, nor so little desire to keep them ; and only beloved sins undo men.

Be sure that you live not idly, but in some constant business of a lawful calling, so far as you have bodily strength. Idleness is a constant sin, and labour is a duty. Idleness is but the devil's home for temptation, and for unprofitable, distracting musings. Labour profiteth others, and ourselves : both soul and body need it. Six days must you labour, and must not eat the bread of idleness. (Prov. xxxi.) God hath made it our duty, and will bless us in his appointed way. I have known grievous, despairing melancholy cured, and turned into a life of godly cheerfulness, principally by setting upon constancy and diligence in the business of families and callings. It turns the thoughts from temptation, and leaveth the devil no opportunity : it pleaseth God if done in obedience, and it purifieth the dis-tempered blood. Though thousands of poor people that live in want, and have wives and children that must also feel it, one would think should be distracted with griefs and cares, yet few of them fall into the disease of melancholy, because labour keepeth the body sound, and leaveth them no leisure for melancholy musings : whereas, in London, and great towns, abundance of women that never sweat with bodily work, but live in idleness, especially when from fulness they fall into want, are miserable objects, continually vexed, and near distraction with discontent, and a restless mind.

If you will not be persuaded to business, your friends, if they can, should force you to it.

And if the devil turn religious as an angel of light, and tell you that this is but turning away your thoughts from God, and that worldly thoughts and business are unholy, and fit for worldly men ; tell him that Adam was in innocency to dress and keep his garden, and Noah that had all the world, was to be husbandman, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob kept sheep and cattle, and Paul was a tent-maker, and Christ himself is justly supposed to have worked at his supposed father's trade, as he went on fishing with his disciples. And Paul saith, idleness is disorderly walking, and he that will not work let him not eat. God made soul and body, and hath commanded work to both.

And if Satan would drive you unseasonably upon longer secret prayer than you can bear, remember that even sickness

will excuse the sick from that sort of duty which they are unable for, and so will your disease ; and the unutterable groans of the spirit are accepted.

If you have privacy out of hearing, I would give you this advice, that, instead of long meditation, or long secret prayer, you will sing a psalm of praise to God, such as the twenty-third, or the one hundred and thirty-third, &c. This will excite your spirit to that sort of holy affection which is much more acceptable to God, and suitable to the hopes of a believer, than your repining troubles are.

IV. But yet I have not done with the duty of those that take care of distressed, melancholy persons, especially husbands to their wives, (for it is much more frequently the disease of women than of men,) when the disease disableth them to help themselves, the most of their helps, under God, must be from others; and this is of two sorts: 1. In prudent carriage to them; 2. In medicine and diet; a little of both.

1. A great part of their cure lieth in pleasing them, and avoiding all displeasing things, as far as lawfully can be done. Displeasedness is much of the disease; and a husband that hath such a wife is obliged to do his best to cure her, both in charity, and by his relative bond, and for his own peace. It is a great weakness in some men, that if they have wives, who, by natural passionate weakness, or by melancholy, or crazedness, are wilful, and will not yield to reason, they show their anger at them to their further provocation: you took her in marriage for better and for worse, for sickness and health. If you have chosen one that, as a child, must have every thing that she crieth for, and must be spoken fair, and as it was rocked in the cradle, or else it will be worse, you must condescend to do it, and so bear the burden which you have chosen, as may not make it heavier to you. Your passion and sourness towards a person that cannot cure her own unpleasing carriage, is a more inexcusable fault and folly than hers, who hath not the power of reason as you have.

If you know any lawful thing that will please them in speech, in company, in apparel, in rooms, in attendance, give it them; if you know at what they are displeased, remove it. I speak not of the distracted, that must be mastered by force, but of the sad and melancholy: could you devise how to put them in a pleased condition you might cure them.

2. As much as you can, divert them from the thoughts which

are their trouble ; keep them on some other talks and business ; break in upon them, and interrupt their musings ; rouse them out of it, but with loving importunity ; suffer them not to be long alone ; get fit company to them, or them to it ; especially, suffer them not to be idle, but drive or draw them to some pleasing works which may stir the body, and employ the thoughts : If they are addicted to reading, let it not be too long, nor any books that are unfit for them ; and rather let another read to them than themselves. Dr. Sibbes's books, and some useful, pleasing history or chronicles, or news of great matters abroad in the world, may do somewhat to divert them.

3. Often set before them the great truths of the gospel which are fittest to comfort them ; and read them informing, comforting books, and live in a loving, cheerful manner with them.

4. Choose for them a skilful, prudent minister of Christ, both for their secret counsel and public audience ; one that is skilled in such cases, and one that is peaceable, and not contentious, erroneous, or fond of odd opinions ; one that is rather judicious in his preaching and praying than passionate, except when he urgeth the gospel doctrines of consolation, and then the more fervently the better ; and one that they much esteem and reverence, and will regardfully hear.

5. Labour to convince them frequently how great a wrong it is to the God of infinite love and mercy, and to a Saviour who hath so wonderfully expressed his love, to think hardlier of him than they would do of a friend, yea, or of a moderate enemy ; and so hardly to be persuaded of that love which hath been manifested by the most stupendous miracle. Had they but a father, husband, or friend, that had ventured his life for them, and given them all that ever they had, were it not a shameful ingratitude and injury to suspect still that they intended all against them, and designed mischief to them, and did not love them ? How hath God and our Saviour deserved this : and many that say it is not God that they suspect, but themselves, do but hide their misery by this mistake, while they deny God's greatest mercies ; and though they would fain have Christ and grace, will not believe that God who offereth it them will give it them, but think he is one that will remedilessly damn a poor soul that desireth to please him, and had rather have his grace than all the sinful pleasures of the world.

6. Carry them oft abroad into strange company. Usually they reverence strangers, and strange faces do divert them,

especially travelling into other parts, if they can bear the motion.

7. It is a useful way, if you can, to engage them in comforting others that are in deeper distresses than they; for this will tell them that their case is not singular, and they will speak to themselves while they speak to others. One of the chief means which cured my fears of my soul's condition, about forty-eight years ago, was oft comforting others that had the same doubts, whose lives persuaded me of their sincerity.

And it would be a pretty diversion to send to them some person that is in some error, which they are most against, to dispute it with them, that, while they whet their wits to convince them, and confute them, it may turn their thoughts from their own distress. Forester tells us that a melancholy patient of his, who was a papist, was cured when the Reformation came into the country, by eager and oft disputing against it. A better cause may better do it.

8. If other means will not do, neglect not physic, and though they will be averse to it, as believing that the disease is only in the mind, they must be persuaded or forced to it. I have known the lady deep in melancholy, who a long time would neither speak, nor take physic, nor endure her husband to go out of the room, and with the restraint and grief he died, and she was cured by physic put down her throat with a pipe, by force.

If it were, as some of them fancy, a possession of the devil, it is possible physic might cast him out, for if you cure the melancholy, his bed is taken away, and the advantage gone by which he worketh. Cure the choler, and the cholerick operations of the devil cease. It is by means and humours in us that he worketh.

But choose a physician who is specially skilled in this disease, and hath cured many others. Meddle not with women, and ignorant boasters, nor with young, inexperienced men, nor with hasty, busy, over-doing, venturous men, who cannot have time to study the patient's temper and disease, but choose experienced, cautious men.

Medicinal remedies and theological used not to be given together by the same hand; but in this case of perfect complication of the maladies of mind and body, I think it not unfit, if I do it not unskilfully. My advice is, that they that can have an ancient, skilful, experienced, honest, careful, cautious phy-

sician, neglect not to use him, nor meddle with any of the medicines which I hereafter mention, nor with any other receipts whatever, but by their physician's advice ; for there is so great diversity of bodily temperatures, age, and many accidents, and of the roots and causes of the same symptoms, as that the same medicine may cure one and hurt another, and may cure the same man at one time, which at another time it may hurt. Skill in managing of it doth much of the cure, and not the medicine without it.

But yet because there are multitudes of persons so very poor that they cannot give a shilling to a physician, and the dearthness of physicians and apothecaries so discourageth them who have not money, that they do not seek to any for helps, but some women, who tell them of their receipts. And as there are many in the country that are quite out of the reach of a skilful physician, and because there are now so great a number of empirics, and young inexperienced physicians, that will rashly venture before they thoroughly understand the body or the disease ; and because overdoing, and venturing rashly, kills so many ; for these reasons, I will add a few safe and cheap medicines, which the poor may make themselves, and which will not cause much loathing to their stomachs ; though I venture on the censure of some physicians. I am none myself, but I see many score, much younger than I, venture much further, when they have got a license, to the great cost of the purses and bodies of their patients.

The disease called melancholy is formally in the spirits, whose distemper unfits them for their office, in serving the imagination, understanding, memory, and affections ; so, by their distemper, the thinking faculty is diseased, and becomes like an inflamed eye, or a foot that is sprained or out of joint, disabled for its proper work.

The matter which is the root and foundation is usually a depravation of the mass of blood, which is the vehicle of the spirits, and that is usually accompanied with some diseases of the stomach, spleen, liver, or other parts, which are for the due concoction, motion, and purification of the blood, which diseases are so various, that they are seldom the same in many persons, and hardly known to the wisest physicians. The spleen is most commonly accused, and often guilty, and the stomach, pancreas, mesentery, omentum, liver, yea, and reins, not rarely are the root, sometimes by obstructing humours, and that of

several qualities, and sometimes by stones, and sometimes by various sorts of humours, and sometimes by vesicles, but obstructed, if not tumified spleens, are most suspected.

Such a black, distinct humour called melancholy, which hath of old been accused, is rarely, if ever, found in any, unless you will call either blood, or excrementitious humours by that name, which are grown black by mortification, for want of motion and spirits. But the blood itself may be called melancholy blood when it hath contracted that distemper and pravity by feculency, sluggishness, or adustion, which disposeth it to the melancholy effects.

But sometimes persons that are sound, are suddenly cast into melancholy by a fright, or by the death of a friend, or by some great loss or cross, or some sad tidings, even in an hour, which shows that it cometh not always from any humour called melancholy, nor for any foregoing disease at all.

But the very act of the mind doth suddenly disorder the passions, and perturb the spirits, and the disturbed spirits, in time, vitiate the blood which containeth them, and the vitiated blood doth, in time, vitiate the viscera and parts which it passeth through, and so the disease beginning in the senses and soul, doth draw first the spirits, and then the humours, and then the parts into the fellowship, and soul and body are sick together.

And it is of great use to the physician to know where the depravation did begin, whether in the mind or in the body, and if in the body, whether in the blood, or in the viscera, for the cure must be fitted accordingly.

And yet the melancholy brains may be eased, and the mental depravation much kept under, though an obstructed, yea, a scarified spleen, continue uncured many years.

And though the disease begin in the mind and spirits, and the body be yet sound, yet physic, even purging, often cureth it, though the patient say that physic cannot cure souls, for the soul and body are wonderfully co-partners in their diseases and cure, and if we know not how it doth it, yet when experience telleth us that it doth it, we have reason to use such means.

I. Right usage and diet are a great part of the cure. Of the first, I spake before. The patient must be pleased, delighted, dealt with as capable, kept from solitude and from musing, and from sad and troubling words and things, and their objections

wisely answered, and their judgments in religion kept from troubling mistakes, by right information ; especially they must be kept in diverting business, and if it could be hard labour, even to good transpiration and sweat, to actuate, contemporate, and purify the blood, and excite the igneous spirits, (which are the instruments of the motion and purification of the blood, and of life itself,) it would greatly help the cure ; especially such exercises twice a day, before dinner and supper, an hour or two together, dissipate and concoct indigested matter, excite natural heat, and expel excrements. As to diet, it must, as physic, be fitted to the case of the body.

This disease is sometimes in dry bodies, and sometimes in those that are moist and fat. It is sometimes in overheated blood, and sometimes in that which is too cold and sluggish, and these must have quite different cures. You may thus perceive the differences in the main : one sort of melancholy persons are only sad, misgiving, fearful of troubled thoughts, despairing, as undone, and solitary musing, and cannot be satisfied and comforted, much silent, and dull to action, and will hardly stir, rather too cold than hot, troubled with wind and ill digestion.

But there is another sort that have overheated blood that are fierce, talkative, bold, boasting, laughing, that have seeming visions and raptures, unruly confident, and these must have another manner of remedy, and are almost mad already. And those that have dry lean bodies, must have a moister diet and medicine than the cold, moist, and fat.

I. For the most part, all of them that are merely melancholy, and not overheated near to madness, should eat but sparingly, so as may not spoil digestion ; (though some of them have a greedy appetite ;) they should forbear cheese and beef, and swine's flesh and raw fruits, and for other things not to be too curious in the quality.

But those that have hot and dry bodies, should avoid fasting, and eat as much as they can well digest, but not more, and should eat boiled borage and lettuce, and stewed prunes, stewed or roasted apples, half an hour before meat, and raw apples, if experience of windiness or rheum forbid it not.

II. And for physic, though the overheated, talkative, confident sort be near to bedlam, I shall briefly offer a little for a preventive, if there be hope.

1. Be sure that they taste no brandy or hot waters, unless

you would have them presently stark mad ; no, nor any hot wines, strong liquors, or aromatic things, such as ginger, pepper, cloves, or any of the like ; nor mustard, horse radish, garlic, onions, or any biting thing. 2. Let them purge much with senna in whey. Take three gallons of clarified whey, put in it two handfuls of balm, and as much fumitory, (if the time of year serve,) and as much borage, boil it to two gallons, and put it into a steam pot of earth, that hath a spigot at the bottom, (or a small barrel,) and put into it, in a thin canvass bag, two ounces of senna, an ounce of epithyme, an ounce of bruised aniseed, and an handful of ground ivy, (called alehoof,) bruised, and two gads of steel to sink it ; when it hath stood two days, or less, drink a pint every morning in bed, and lie an hour after it, and if it give not three stools, drink near a pint more at five o'clock, continue this three weeks, at least, every day, having another vessel ready when the first is done.

Or else boil all the same herbs in three pints of whey, to half the quantity, strain it, and put in it three drams of senna, and a dram of bruised aniseed ; let it stand cold an hour and a half, and after warm it on gentle embers one hour, drink it the next morning, and so on for three weeks.

3. Boil six sliced pippins or pearmaines, in three pints of whey to a quart, strain it, and drink a pint every morning in bed, and, if you can, sleep an hour after it, and the other pint at night, instead of either breakfast or supper. Do this many weeks when you take not the purging whey. And if you drink the like instead of beer, at dinner, to a hot dry body, it is best.

4. But it is the ordinary colder, sad, despairing melancholy that I intend in these prescripts, and for such use the following means :

I. If it be in the heat of summer, and they be not very cold, the aforesaid purging whey is good for them, but otherwise, instead of it, use this following diet drink, which is not very loathsome to the stomach :

1. Take pretty strong wort, and boil it in five gallons till it comes to three ; of the leaves of balm, borage, agrimony, scabious, and wild marjoram, (or pot marjoram, where the other cannot be got,) each two small handfuls ; of the roots of dandelion and polipody, each two ounces ; use as you do other beer, and when you turn [tun] it up, (casting out the herbs and roots before you put barm to it,) put in it this following bag to three gallons :

2. Take of senna three ounces and a half ; of wild marjoram and sweet marjoram, each a small handful ; of liquorice scraped and aniseed bruised, each an ounce ; of chalk pund, a pound, and three gads of steel ; put all in a thin canvass bag, and so hang it by a thread, that the bottom only may touch the bottom of the vessel ; when it hath stood two days, drink a pint every morning till it is done. A full body that can bear more purging, may take another draught at five o'clock, and one that suspecteth a bilious liver and gall, may put but three ounces of senna and one of rhubarb.

3. One that loveth the taste of wormwood, to overcome the senna taste, and is in haste, may take this following instead of the former :

Take of good beer, ready to drink, three gallons, put it into a wooden or earthen vessel, as aforesaid, and hang in it a bag that hath of wormwood, agrimony, and wild marjoram each two handfuls ; of centaury, one handful ; of senna, three ounces ; of liquorice and aniseed, of each an ounce ; of steel, three gads. At two days' end, drink it as before. If it be a weak thin body, he may take it with intermission, as he is able, and forbear every third and fourth day.

4. These diet drinks are not all so effectual as this that followeth, but easier to most stomachs ; but the deeper melancholy persons had better take the next.

Take of senna, an ounce ; of liquorice scraped, two scruples ; of cinnamon bruised, one scruple ; put all in forty-four spoonfuls of water, let it stand in a pot stopped, one hour and a half cold, and another hour and a half warm on the embers, but not boiling, strain it, and let it stand still in a pot, well stopped, two hours. Take of this twelve or fourteen spoonfuls ; of sirop of vinegar an ounce ; of cremor tartary powder, a drachm ; dissolve it on the embers, and drink it warm in bed, and lie an hour after, but do not sleep or sweat ; at four hours' end, drink a draught of broth, made of veal, or cock, till it will jelly, which had boiled in it some epithyme, polypody, balm, and a little rosemary, with a little nutmeg.

Take this portion in this manner three next days together ; every week for a body that can bear it ; in ordinary melancholy for seven weeks together ; in old, obstinate melancholy for twelve or fourteen weeks ; but if it be a body not full and strong enough to bear three days, take it the two next days every week : it

gripeth more than the ordinary ways of using senna, but that need not be feared, for it never brings the bloody-flux, nor useth to weaken; and the griping doth good, by drawing down the troubling matter from the head, into the common passages.

5. If it be a thin tender body, aged or weak, that hath sharp humours, and can bear none of the aforesaid effectual purges, such a one may, either in chicken broth, or in barley water, or rather in whey, or posset drink, boiled strong with pippins, infuse all night (or rather three hours) some senna, in a cloth, and drink it in the morning as often as he can bear it, that is, two drams for very weak persons, or three ordinarily, in near a pint of the liquor, putting a little cinnamon into it.

6. If the aforesaid remedies do but begin the cure, use this next to perfect it; or this alone for tender and cold stomachs that cannot bear the other, which may yet much better go before this, and this come last.

Take, for a hot body, white wine, for a cold body sherry, two quarts; put it into a great bottle, and put to it, of senna one ounce; of cinnamon bruised two drams; of saffron one dram; of cremor tartary powdered, half an ounce, if it be sherry, or two drachms if it be white wine. Let it stand, close stopped, three days, (shaking it oft,) then put it out into several bottles (to keep the better); take of this three spoonfuls fasting, every day; two may serve when it is for prevention in a weak body, or four when you would purge more. If the taste seem the worse for the tartar to any, you may leave it out, and put instead of it half an ounce of epithyme, and take a dram of cremor tartary dissolved in a draught of good broth, an hour or more after it.

This medicine is not loathsome or nauseous to the stomach, and is magnified by former and later physicians, of the greatest experience and success in this disease: but all such things must be patiently long continued, and no violent medicines used.

7. Chalybeate medicines, also, are usually profitable in this disease; but, because country people cannot themselves make them, I am loath to insert them; one I will prescribe for them who have an apothecary to make it.

Take of unprepared filings of steel six ounces, make it red hot in an iron ladle, and quench it in five or six ounces of white

wine; do this thrice, then put to the wine, of wormwood water, and of scurvy-grass water, each a pint; of aqua mirabilis, two ounces (or, instead of them all, a quart of compound radish-water); of sugar, six ounces; of senna, an ounce and half; of cremor tartary, three drams; of saffron, a dram; of cinnamon, a dram; let it stand in a warm place three days (oft-shaking it). Take two ounces, (four or five spoonfuls,) fasting, many weeks together, and walk or labour after it.

Or, after sufficient purging, fresh succory roots, made into a conserve, and taken with a little prepared steel, for poor people that have obstructions, may do well; half an ounce of conserve with half a scruple of steel.

8. If they be costive, so as to affect the head, the more; else let them do as followeth. ✓

1. Fast not, especially in the mornings, but take some light breakfast, and eat the less at dinner, either half a dish of panado, with four or five spoonfuls of white wine in it, (when they eat it,) or gruel, or broth made of veal or chicken, or an old cock, with a sheep's head, boiled till it will jelly, and a little white wine put in at the eating, and the same at supper, unless the stomach be clogged with crudities, and then forbear supper or dinner.

2. Some find a little saffron in broth cure costiveness, and it is one of the truest cordials known in the world.

3. With some, a dram of cremor tartary in broth, will do it, in the morning.

4. Sit not down nor walk as soon as you rise in the morning, but stand still upright a quarter of an hour when you are dressed, and as long after dinner; it helpeth the excrements to descend. And if you feel the least possibility, go to stool, and make not too much haste away.

5. If you have no rheum or cold windiness of stomach, eat sometimes ten or twelve stewed prunes, and sometimes four or five roasted pippins, before dinner.

6. Take Chio turpentine of Venice, (or Venice turpentine if that cannot be had,) wash it well, and make it into hard pills with powder of epithyme, as much as you can get it to take up. Let the pills be small, and take a dram, or more or less, as you are able to get them down at a swallow, covered in a spoonful of sirop of apples, or of balm, or of mallows, a little before a late supper, to work the next morning; or turpentine with

liquorice powder, of itself, in an egg, or any way got down, may serve.

7. If more be needful, make the same turpentine into pills with rhubarb, powdered, or senna, powdered, or both together, and take it before supper. It goeth down easily in a spoonful of any pleasant sirop. But use no more clysters, nor purging things, when once the melancholy is overcome, than you needs must, for it diseaseth nature as to its proper office.

8. Their drink is of great moment, that unless in cold bodies, they take no strong wines nor claret, but either ale or good beer, with a little white wine, or posset drinks made with but little milk, and some strong ale and white wine, or posset made drink with cider, ale, and a little white wine.

Or take a quart of the juice of balm, with a little ground ivy, and put it into a vessel of good ale or beer, of about three or four gallons, and drink this at meat. Or, sometimes, some wormwood¹ ale, but not long.

But cold, dull bodies may drink good strong beer or ale, that is not hard, and fat, cold persons may endure sack.

The devil hath another cure for the sad and melancholy than such as I have here prescribed, which is to cast away all belief of the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, or at least not to think of it; and for to take religion to be a superstitious, needless fancy; and for to laugh at the threatenings of the Scripture, and to go to play-houses, and cards, and dice, and to drink and play away melancholy; honest recreations are very good for melancholy persons, if we could get them to use them; but, alas! this satanical cure is but like the witches' bargain with the devil, who promiseth them much, but payeth them with shame and utter misery. The end of that mirth is incurable sorrow, if timely repentance cure not the cause. The garrison of Satan in the hearts of sinners, is strongly kept when they are in peace, but when they have fooled away time, and mercy, and hope, die they must, there is no remedy; and to go merrily and unbelievably to hell, after all God's calls and warnings, will be no abatement of their torment; to go out of the world in the guilt of sin, and to end life before they would know the use of it, and to undergo God's justice for the mad contempt of Christ and grace, will put a sad end to all their mirth, for "there is no peace to the wicked, saith

my God." (Isa. xlviii. 22, and lvii. 21.) But Christ saith to his mourners, (Matt. v. 4,) "Blessed are you that mourn, for you shall be comforted;" and, (John, xvi. 20,) "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." And Solomon knew that the house of mourning was better than the house of feasting; and that the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth, (Eccles. vii. 2, 3, 4,) but holy joy of faith and hope is best of all.

HOW TO DO GOOD TO MANY:

OR,

THE PUBLIC GOOD

IS

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

DIRECTIONS AND MOTIVES TO IT.

INTENDED FOR AN AUDITORY OF LONDON CITIZENS ;

AND

PUBLISHED FOR THEM FOR WANT OF LEAVE TO PREACH THEM.

“ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a people zealous of good works.”—TITUS ii. 14.

TO THE

TRULY CHRISTIAN MERCHANTS,

AND OTHER

CITIZENS OF LONDON.

As my disease, and the restraint of rulers, seem to tell me that my pulpit-work is at an end, so also my abode among you, or in this world, cannot be long. What work I have lived for I have given the world more durable notice than transient words; it hath been such as men in power were against, and it seems, will no longer endure. What doctrine it was that I last prepared for you, I thought meet to desire the press thus to tell you; not to vindicate myself, nor to characterise them who think that it deserves six months' imprisonment, but to be in your hands a provocation and direction for that great work of a christian life, sincerely done, will prepare you for that safety, joy, and glory, which London, England, or earth, will not afford, and which men or devils cannot take from you. When through the meritorious righteousness of Christ, your holy love and good works to him in his brethren shall make you the joyful objects of that sentence, "Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom," &c.; this is the life that need not be repented of, as spent in vain.

Dear friends, in this farewell I return you my most hearty thanks for your extraordinary love and kindness to myself, much more for your love to Christ, and to his servants, who have more needed your relief. God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love. You have visited those that others imprisoned, and fed those that others brought into want;

and when some ceased not to preach for our affliction, it quenched not your impartial charity. It has been an unspeakable mercy unto me almost all my days, (when I received nothing from them,) to have known so great a number as I have done, of serious, humble, holy, charitable Christians, in whom I saw that Christ hath an elect, peculiar people, quite different from the brutish, proud, hypocritical, malignant, unbelieving world ! O how sweet hath the familiarity of such been to me, whom the ignorant world hath hated ! Most of them are gone to Christ, I am following : we leave you here to longer trial : it is like you have a bitter cup to drink, but be faithful to the death, and Christ will give you the crown of life. The word of God is not bound, and the Jerusalem above is free, where is the general assembly of the first-born, an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of the just made perfect, with Christ their glorified head. The Lord guide, bless, and preserve you.

HOW TO DO GOOD TO MANY; OR, THE PUBLIC GOOD IS THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

GAL. vi. 10.

As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

GOOD is an epithet of the highest signification of any in human language. Some think the name of God is thence derived. Greatness and wisdom are equally his attributes, but goodness is the completion, and sweetest to the creature. Christ appropriateth it to God to be good, that is, essentially, primarily, and perfectly, and universally communicative; when it is said that God is love, the sense is the same, that he is the infinite, essential, and efficiently and finally amiable, perfect good.

But though no one of his attributes in propriety and perfection are communicable, (else he that hath one part of the Deity must have all,) yet he imprinteth his similitude and image on his works; and the impress of his love and goodness is the chief part of his image on his saints; this is their very holiness; for this is the chief part of their likeness to God, and dedication to him; when the Spirit of sanctification is described in Scripture, as given upon believing, it signifieth, that our faithful perception of the redeeming, saving love of God in Christ, is that means which the Spirit of Christ will bless, to the operating of the habit of holy love to God and man, which becomes a new and divine nature to the soul, and is sanctification itself, and the true principle of a holy, evangelical conversation. And as it is said of God, that he is good, and doth good, so every thing is inclined to work as it is; Christ tells us the good tree will bring forth good fruits, &c.; and we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath ordained, that we should walk in them. (Eph. ii. 10.)

Yet man doth not good as the sun shineth, by a full bent of

natural necessitation, else the world would not be as it is ; but as a free, undetermined agent, which hath need to be commanded by a law, and stirred up by manifold motives and exhortations ; such as the Holy Ghost here useth in the text.

Where, 1. Doing good is the substance of the duty. 2. Men are the objects. 3. To all men is the extent. 4. Especially to them of the household of faith is the direction for precedency. 5. And while we have opportunity is the season, including a motive to make haste. So large and excellent a theme would require more than my allotted time to handle it fully, therefore, I shall now confine myself to the duty extended, “Do good to all men.”

Doct. To do good to all men is all men’s duty, to which every Christian especially must apply himself.

All men should do it : true Christians can do it, through grace, and must do it, and will do it. A good man is a common good ; Christ’s Spirit in them is not a dead or idle principle. It makes them in their several measures the salt of the earth, and the lights of the world ; they are fruitful branches of the true vine. Every grace tendeth to well-doing, and to the good of the whole body, for which each single member is made. Even hypocrites, as wooden legs, are serviceable to the body, but every living member much more, except some diseased ones, who may be more troublesome and dangerous than the wooden leg. It is a sign he is a branch cut off and withered who careth little for any but himself. The malignant diabolist hateth the true and spiritual good ; the ignorant know not good from evil ; the erroneous take evil for good, and falsehood for truth ; the slothful hypocrite wisheth much good, but doth but little ; the formal, ceremonious hypocrite extols the name and image of goodness ; the worldly hypocrite will do good if he can do it cheaply, without any loss or suffering to his flesh ; the libertine hypocrite pleadeth Christ’s merits against the necessity of doing good, and looketh to be saved because Christ is good, though he be barren and ungodly ; and some ignorant teachers have taught them to say, when they can find no true faith, repentance, holiness, or obedience in themselves, that it is enough to believe that Christ believed and repented for them, and was holy and obedient for them. He was, indeed, holy and obedient for penitent believers ; not to make holiness and obedience unnecessary to them, but to make them sincerely holy and obedient to himself, and to excuse them from the necessity of that perfect

holiness and obedience here, which is necessary to those that will be justified by the law of works or innocency. Thus all sorts of bad men have their oppositions to doing good ; but to the sincere Christian it is made as natural ; his heart is set upon it ; he is created, and redeemed, and sanctified for it, as the tree is made for fruit. He studieth it as the chief trade and business that he liveth for ; he waketh for it ; yea, he sleepeth, and eateth, and drinketh for it ; even to enable his body to serve his soul, in serving that Lord whose redeemed, peculiar people are all zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.) The measure of this zeal of doing good is the utmost of their power, with all their talents in desire and sincere endeavour ; the extent of the object is to all, (though not to all alike,) that is to as many as they can.

But for order's sake we must here consider :

I. Who this all meaneth, and in what order.

II. What is good ; and what is that good which we must do.

III. What qualifications he must have that will do good to many.

IV. What rules he must observe in doing it.

V. What works are they that must be done by him that would do good to many.

VI. What motives should quicken us to the practice.

VII. Some useful consecrations of the point.

I. It is God's prerogative to do good to all ; man's ability will not reach it. But our all is, as many as we can do good to.

1. To men of all sorts, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, kindred, neighbours, strangers, friends, enemies, good and bad ; none excepted that are within our power.

2. Not to a few only, but to as many persons of all sorts as we can ; as he that hath true grace would still have more for himself ; so he that doth good would fain do more good ; and he that doth good to some would fain do good to many more. All good is progressive, and tendeth towards increase and perfection ; why are the faithful said to love and long for the day of Christ's appearing, but because it is the great marriage day of the Lamb, when all the elect shall be perfected in our heavenly society ? And that makes it a much more desirable day than that of our particular glorification at death. The perfection of the whole body addeth to the perfection of every part, for it is a state of felicity in perfect love ; and love maketh every man's good whom we love to be as sweet to us as our own, yea, maketh it our own ; and then the perfection and glory of every saint

will be our delight and glory ; and to see each single one's love united in one perfect joy and glory, will add to each person's joy and glory. And can you wonder if our little sparks of grace do tend towards the same diffused multiplication ; and if every member long for the completing of the body of Christ ? O how much will this add to every faithful Christian's joy ! It will not be then a little flock ; not despised for singularity, nor hid in the crowd of impious sinners, nor dishonoured by infirmities, or paltry quarrels among ourselves, nor with the mixture of hypocrites ; it will not be over-voted, or trod down, and persecuted by the power or number of the ignorant enemies. O Christians ! go on in doing good to all men with cheerfulness, for it all tendeth to make up the body of Christ, and to prepare for that glorious state and day ; every soul you convert, every brick that you lay in the building, tendeth to make up the house and city of God.

But as all motion and action is first upon the nearest object, so must ours ; and doing good must be in order : first we must begin at home with our own souls and lives ; and then to our nearest relations, and friends, and acquaintance, and neighbours ; and then to our societies, church, and kingdom, and all the world. But mark that the order of execution, and the order of estimation and intention, differ. Though God set up lights so small as will serve but for one room, and though we must begin at home, we must far more esteem and desire the good of multitudes, of city, and church, and commonwealth ; and must set no bounds to our endeavours, but what God and disability set.

II. But what is that good that we must do ? Good is an attribute of being, and is its perfection, or well-being : God's goodness is perfection itself ; and as he is the fountain of being, so also of goodness ; and, therefore, his goodness is called love, whose highest act is his essential self-love, which is infinitely above his love to the world ; but yet it is communicative love, which made all things good, and rested in seeing them all good. And as he is the fountain, so the same will or love is the measuring rule, and the end of all derived good. The prime notion of the creature's goodness is its conformity to the will of God ; but the second is its own perfection as its own, which, indeed, is but the same conformity.

Therefore, the true good which we must do men, is to make them conformable to the regulating will of God, that they may be happy in the pleased will of God ; and to help them to all

means for soul and body necessary hereunto ; and this for as many as possibly we can.

III. The rules for judging and doing good are these. 1. That is the greatest good which is God's greatest interest ; and his interest is his glory, and the complaisance of his fulfilled will.

2. Therefore, the good of the world, the church, of nations, of multitudes, is greater than the good of few.

3. The good of the soul is greater than of the body.

4. The avoiding the greatest evil is better than avoiding less.

5. Everlasting good is better than short.

6. Universal good which leaveth no evil, is better than a particular good.

7. That is the best good, as to means, which most conduceth to the end.

8. There is no earthly good that is not mixed with some evil, nor any commodity that hath not some inconvenience, or discommodity.

9. No sin must be done for any good.

10. Some things may be done for good which would be sin, were it not for the good which they are done for. It would be sin to give a robber your money, were it not to save your life, or some other commodity ; it would be sin to do some things on the Lord's day, which necessity, or a greater good, may make a duty : your own defence may make it a duty to strike another, which else would be a sin.

11. In such cases there is need of great prudence and impartiality to know whether the good or the evil do preponderate ; and a great part of the actions of our lives must be managed by that prudence, or else they will be sinful.

12. Therefore it is no small part of a minister's duty to counsel men, as a wise, skilful, and faithful casuist.

IV. To do good to many requireth many excellent qualifications ; this is so far from being every one's performance, that we should be glad if a great part of mankind did not do more hurt than good.

1. He that will do his country good, must know what is good, and what is bad ; a fool's love is hurtful ; he knoweth not how to use it ; he will love you to death, as an unskilful physician doth his most beloved patient ; or love you into calamity, as amorous fondlings often do each other. This is the great enemy of human peace, men know not good from evil ; like him that killed his son, thinking he had been a thief ; or like

routed soldiers, that run by mistake into the army of the enemy. Malignity and error make mad and doleful work in the world, and worst in those that should be wisest, and the greatest instruments of public good ; the Scripture mistaketh not, which tells us of enemies, and haters of God ; and most of the world are professed adversaries to Christ ; the Jews crucified him as an enemy to Cæsar, and to the safety of their law and country ; and if we may judge by their enmity to holiness, the Spirit of Christ is taken for an intolerable enemy by no small part of nominal Christians ; the laws of Christ are judged too strict ; the hypocrites that bow to him, and hate his laws, do call them hypocrites that are but serious in the practice of Christianity, and hate them that have any more religion than compliments, ceremony, and set words ; the image of a Christian and a minister is set up in militant opposition to them that are Christians and ministers indeed ; if men that are called to the sacred office would save souls in good earnest, and pull them out of the fire, and go any further than pomp and stage-work, they pass for the most insufferable men in the world : Elias is taken for the troubler of Israel, and Paul for a pestilent, seditious fellow, and the apostles as the off-scouring of all things. Many a martyr hath died by fire, for seeking to save men from the fire of hell ; and when the bedlam world is at this pass, what good is to be expected from such men ? When men, called Christians, hate and oppose the God, the Christ, the Holy Ghost, to whom they were vowed in baptism ; when drunkenness, and whoredom, and perjury, and lying, and all debauchery, is taken to be more friendly and tolerable than the most serious worship of God, and obedience to his laws, and avoiding sin ; in a word, when the greatest good is taken for unsufferable evil, you may know what good to expect from such.

They will all tell you that we must love God above all, and our neighbours as ourselves ; but to fight against his word, and worship, and servants, is but an ill expression of their love to God ; and seeking their destruction, because they will not sin, is an ill expression of love to their neighbours. When men judge of good and evil, as Satan teacheth them, and as selfish pride and worldly interest incline them, what wonder if such love have murdered thirty thousand, or forty thousand, at once, in France, and two hundred thousand in Ireland, and have filled the christian world with religious blood ? Read but the doleful histories of church contentions for one thousand three

hundred years, the stories of their wars and mutual persecutions, the streams of blood that have been shed in east and west, the inquisition, and bloody laws still kept up, and all this as good works, and done in love, and you would think that the sacred Roman hierarchy did believe that Christ hath put down the legal sacrificing of beasts, that he might, instead of it, have the blood of men ; and that he who requireth his disciples to lay down their lives for him, would have a priesthood kept up to sacrifice their lives to him, that will not wilfully break his laws. And all this is but as Christ foretold us, that his servants should be killed as a piece of service to God. No wonder if such men offer God a ludicrous, mimical sort of service, and worship him in vain, by heartless lip-labour, according to the traditions of men, when they dare sacrifice saints to the Lord of saints, and quiet their consciences by calling them such as they are themselves. But to the honour of goodness, and shame of sin, to show that they sin against the light of nature itself, they put the name of evil upon good before they dare openly oppose and persecute it ; and they put the names of good upon evil before they dare defend and justify it.

But, alas ! it is not only the ungodly that do mischief, thinking verily that it is good. How many doth the church suffer by, while they prosecute their mistakes, who yet do much good in promoting the common truth which Christians are agreed in ?

2. He that will do good to all or many, must have an unfeigned love to them. Hatred is mischievous, and neglect is unprofitable. Love is the natural fountain of beneficence. Love earnestly longeth to do good, and delighteth in doing it : it maketh many to be as one, and to be as ready to help others as each member of the body is to help the rest. Love maketh another's wants, sufferings, and sorrows, to be our own : and who is not willing to help himself ? Love is a principle ready, active, ingenuous, and constant : it studieth to do good, and would still do more : it is patient with the infirmities of others, which men void of love do aggravate into odiousness, and make them their excuse for all their neglects, and their pretence for all their cruelties. Could you make all the slanderers, backbiters, revilers, despisers, persecutors, to love their neighbours as themselves, you may easily judge what would be the effect ; and whether they would revile, or prosecute, or imprison, or ruin themselves, or study how to make themselves odious, or suborn perjured witnesses against themselves.

3. Yea, he that will do good to many, must love many better than himself, and prefer the common good much before his own, and seek his own in the common welfare. He that loveth good, as good, will best love the best : and an honest old Roman would have called him an unworthy beast that preferred his estate, or life, before the common welfare. To be ready to do, suffer, or die, for their country, was a virtue which all extolled. A narrow-spirited, selfish man, will serve others no further than it serveth himself, or, at least, will stand with his own safety or prosperity. He will turn as the weathercock, and be for them that are for his worldly interest. I confess that God oft useth such for common good : but it is by raising such storms as would sink them with the ship, and leaving them no great hope to escape by being false, or by permitting such villanies as threaten their own interest. A covetous father may be against gaming and prodigality in his children : the men of this world are wise in their generation : many that have abbey lands will be against popery ; and even atheists, and licentious men, may be loth to be slaves to politic priests, and to come under confession, and perhaps the inquisition ; and those that have not sinned themselves into madness or gross delusions, will be loth to set up a foreign jurisdiction, and become the subjects of an unknown priest, if they can help it. God often useth vice against vice ; and if no worldly, selfish men were the country's or the church's helpers, it must suffer, or trust to miracles.

But yet there is no trust to be put in these men further than their own interest must stand or fall with the common good. If God, and heaven, and conscience, be not more powerful with a man than worldly interest, trust him not against the stream and tide, or when he thinks he can make a better bargain for himself. He that will sell heaven and Christ for the world, will sell you for it, and sell religion, truth, and honesty for it : and if he escape here the end of Ahithophel and Judas, he will venture on all that is out of sight. Christ was the grand benefactor to the world, and the most excellent teacher of love, and self-denial, and contempt of the world, to all that will follow him in doing good to many.

4. He that will do much good must be good himself. Make the tree good if you have good fruit. *Operari sequitur esse.* A bad man is an enemy to the greatest good that he should do. Malignity abhorreth serious piety, and will such promote it ? If Elias be a man of miracles, he shall hear, “ Hast thou found me,

O my enemy !” And Micaiah shall hear, “ I hate him, for he prophesieth not good of me, but evil : feed him with the bread and water of affliction.”

And a bad man, if by accident he be engaged for a good cause, is still suspected by those that know him. They cannot trust him, as being a slave to lust, and to strong temptations, and a secret enemy to the true interest of his country. Alas ! the best are hardly to be trusted far, as being liable to miscarry by infirmity ; how little then is to be hoped for from the wicked ?

5. He that will do much good in the world, must be furnished with considerable abilities, especially prudence and skill in knowing when, and to whom, and how to do it. Without this, he will do more harm than good. Even good men, when they have done much good, by some one miscarriage, tempted by the remnants of selfishness and pride, and by unskilful rashness, have undone all the good they did, and done as much hurt as wicked enemies. There goeth so much to public good, and so many snares are to be avoided, that rash, self-conceited, half-witted men do seldom do much, unless under the conduct of wiser men.

6. He that will be a public blessing to the world, must have a very large prospect, and see the state of all the world, and foresee what is like to come. He must not live as if his neighbourhood were all the land, or his country or his party were all the church, or all the world : he must know what relation all our actions have to other nations, and to all the church of Christ on earth. The want of this universal prospect involveth many in censorious and dividing sects, who would abhor that way if they knew the case of all the church and world.

And we must not look only to a present exigent or advantage, but foresee how our actions will look hereafter, and what changes may put them under other judgments, and what the fruits may be to posterity. Many things cause death which give the patient present ease.

7. He that will do good to many must have christian fortitude, and not be discouraged with difficulties and opposition. He must serve God for the good of men with absolute resolution, and not with the hypocrite’s reserves. He must be armed with patience against not only the malice of enemies, but the ingratitude of friends. The follies, and quarrels, and mutinies, and divisions, and often the abuses of those that he would do good to, must not overcome him. He must imitate God,

and do good to the evil, and bless those that curse him, and pray for them that despitefully use him. He must not promise himself more success than God hath promised him, nor yet despair and turn back discouraged; but conscience must carry him on to the end through all, whatever shall befall him.

8. Therefore he must look for his reward from God, and not expect too much from man. Men are insufficient, mutable, and uncertain: their interests and many accidents may change them. The multitude are of many minds and tempers; and if you please some, you shall displease others, and it is hard to please even one person long. Some great ones will not be pleased, unless you will prefer their wills before the will of God, your country's good, and your own salvation. The poor are so many and so indigent, that no man can answer their desires. If you give twenty pounds to twenty of the poor, forty, or an hundred, that expected the like, will murmur at you, and be displeased. What man ever did so much good in the world as not to be accused by some, as if he were a covetous or a hurtful man?

Therefore, he that will do much good, must firmly believe the life to come, and must do that he doth as the work of God, in obedience to him, and look for his reward in heaven, and not as the hypocrite, in the praise of men, much less as the worldling, in the hope of temporal advantage. He must not wonder if he be rewarded as Socrates was at Athens, and as Christ and his apostles were in the world. Themistocles likened himself to a great fruit tree, which men run for shelter under in a storm, and when the storm is over, they throw stones and cudgels at it, to beat down the fruit. Reckon not on a reward from men, but from God. By what is said, you may perceive what are the great impediments of doing good to many, which must be overcome.

I. One, and the worst, is malignity, which is an enmity to spiritual good; for who will promote that which he is against?

II. Another is unbelief of God's commands and promises, when men take not themselves to be his subjects and stewards, nor can take his promise for good security for their reward.

III. Another is the fore-mentioned sin of selfishness, which makes a man's self to be his chiefest love and care, and more to him than Christ's interest, or the church or kingdom.

IV. Another is a false conceit that a man is so obliged to provide for his children and kindred, that all that he can get,

how rich soever he be, must be left to make them rich, except some inconsiderable pittance.

V. Another is a great neglect of parents to prepare their children to be profitable to the commonwealth, but only to live in prosperity to themselves. 1. Children should be taught as much as may be to become persons of understanding, and such wisdom as may make them useful. 2. And especially to be truly religious; for then they will be devoted to do good, in love and obedience to God. 3. They should be taught what it is to be members of societies, and what duty they owe to church and state, and how great a part of their duty lieth in caring for the common good, and how sinful and damnable it is to live only to themselves, and how much this selfishness is the sum of all iniquity. 4. Those callings should be chosen for them which they are fittest for, and in which they may do most public good.

VI. And a timorous, cowardly disposition is a great hinderance to public good; for such will be still for the self-saving way, and afraid of the dangers that attend the greatest duties. If they are called to liberality, they will fear lest they should want themselves. In all costly or hazardous duty there will still be a lion in their way. They cannot trust God; and no wonder, then, if they are not to be trusted themselves.

VII. Lastly, sloth and idleness are constant enemies to well-doing. There are two sorts especially guilty of this; one, and the better, is some religious people, who think that their business is only with God and their own hearts, and that if they could spend all their time in meditation, prayer, and such like exercises, it would be the best kind of life on earth. Among the papists, multitudes, by this conceit, turn friars and nuns. Among us, such spend all their time in hearing sermons, and in reading, and meditating, and prayer, and such like exercises of religion towards God, if they are but rich enough to live without bodily labour, and the example of Mary and Martha, they think, will make this good.

I know that this is no common error. The wicked are of a far different mind. And I know no man can do too much to save his soul: but we may do one sort of our work too much to the neglect of other parts. We have souls in flesh, and both parts have their proper necessity and work. Mary did somewhat else than hear, though she wisely preferred it in its season. And no one is made for himself alone. You feel that religious exercises do you good, but what good is it that you do to others?

I confess a monk's prayers for others is a good work. But God will have praying and endeavouring go together, both for yourselves and others. Bare praying God to relieve the poor, and to teach your children, and instruct the ignorant, will not excuse you from relieving, teaching, or instructing them. Yea, and your own good will best come in by your fullest obedience to God. Do what he bids you, and he will take care of your salvation. Your own way may seem best, but will not prove best: it will but cast you into melancholy and disability at last. "Six days shalt thou labour," is more than a permission. It is St. Paul's canon, "He that will not work, (if able,) let him not eat:" and it was King Solomon's mother who taught him the description of a virtuous woman, (Prov. xxxi. 27,) "She eateth not the bread of idleness." God will have mercy and obedience as better than sacrifice. The sentence in judgment is upon doing good to Christ in his members. (Matt. xxv.) When many that hear much, and prophesied, shall be cast out. (Matt. vii. 21.) Doing good is the surest way of receiving good. The duties of the first and second table must go together. He that is not zealous to do good, as well as to get good, hath not the peculiar nature of Christ's flock; (Titus ii. 14;) and zeal will be diligent, and not for sloth.

2. The other sort of the idle are rich, ungodly, worldly persons, who live as if God did give them plenty for nothing but to pamper their own flesh, and feed their own and other's sensuality. They think that persons of wealth and honour may lawfully spend their time in idleness, that is, in Sodom's sin, (Ezek. xvi. 49,) as if God expected least where he giveth most. How little conscience do many lords and ladies make of an idle hour, or life! When poor men's labour is such as tendeth to the common good, the rich, by luxury, sacrifice to the flesh the fruits of other men's endeavours; and instead of living in any profitable employment, devour that which thousands labour for.

It is not the toilsome drudgery of the vulgar which we take to be all rich folks' duty; but idleness and unprofitableness is a sin in the richest. Any of them may find good work enough that is fit for them if they be willing. Children, and servants, and friends, and neighbours, and tenants, have souls and bodies which need their help. None can say, 'God found us no work to do,' or that God gave them more time or wealth than they had profitable use for. Little do they think what it will be, ere long, to reckon for all their time and estates, and to be

judged according to their works : and their own flesh often payeth dear for its ease and pleasure, by those pains and diseases which God hath suited to their sins ; and which usually shorten the lives which they no better use, or snatch them away from that time and wealth which they spent in preparing fuel for hell, and food for the worm that never dieth.

V. But what is it that a man should do that would do good to all or many ? There are some good works which are of far greater tendency than others, to the good of many ; some of them I will name to you.

I. Do as much good as you are able to men's bodies, in order to the greater good of souls. If nature be not supported, men are not capable of other good. We pray for our daily bread before pardon and spiritual blessings, not as if we were better, but that nature is supposed before grace, and we cannot be Christians if we be not men ; God hath so placed the soul in the body, that good or evil shall make its entrance by the bodily senses to the soul. This way God himself conveyeth many of his blessings, and this way he inflicteth his corrections ; ministers that are able and willing to be liberal, find by great experience that kindness and bounty to men's bodies openeth the ear to counsel, and maketh them willing to hear instruction : those in France, that are now trying men's religion in the market, and are at work with money in one hand, and a sword in the other, do understand this to be true. All men are sensible of pain or pleasure, good or evil, to the flesh, before they are sensible what is necessary for their souls. You must therefore speak on that side which can hear, and work upon the feeling part, if you will do good.

Besides this, your charity may remove many great impediments and temptations. It is no easy thing to keep heavenly thoughts upon your mind, and especially to delight in God, and keep the relish of his law upon your hearts, while pinching wants are calling away your mind, and disturbing it with troublesome passions. To suffer some hunger, and go in vile apparel, is not very difficult ; but when there is a family to provide for, a discontented wife and children to satisfy, rents, and debts, and demands unpaid, it must be an excellent Christian that can live contentedly, and cast all his useless care on God, and keep up the sense of his love, and a delight in all his service. Do your best to save the poor from such temptations, as you would yourselves be saved from them.

And when you give to the poor that are ignorant and ungodly, give them after it some counsel for their souls, or some good book which is suited to their cases.

II. If you would do good to many, set yourselves to promote the practical knowledge of the great truths necessary to salvation.

1. Goodness will never be enjoyed or practised without knowledge. Ignorance is darkness, the state of his kingdom, who is the prince of darkness, who by the works of darkness leadeth the blind world to utter darkness ; God is the Father of lights, and giveth wisdom to them that ask and seek it ; he sent his Son to be the light of the world ; his word and ministers are subordinate light ; his servants are all the children of light : ignorance is virtually error, and error the cause of sin and misery. And men are not born wise, but must be made wise by skilful, diligent teaching : parents should begin it, ministers should second them ; but, alas ! how many millions are neglected by both ! and how many neglect themselves, when ministers have done their best ! Ignorance and error are the common road to wickedness, misery, and hell.

2. But what can any others do for such ? Two things I will remember you of, 1. Set up such schools as shall teach children to read the Scriptures, and learn the catechism or principles of religion. Our departed friend, Mr. Thomas Gouge, did set us an excellent pattern for Wales. I think we have grammar schools enough. It is not the knowledge of tongues, and arts, and curious sciences, which the common people want, but the right understanding of their baptismal covenant with God, and of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Decalogue, and Church Communion. A poor honest man, or a good woman, will teach children thus much for a small stipend, better than they are taught it in most grammar schools ; and I would none went to the Universities without the sound understanding of the catechism ; yea, I would none came thence, or into the pulpit, without it.

2. When you have got them to read, give them good books, especially Bibles, and good catechisms, and small practical books, which press the fundamentals on their consciences. Such books are good catechisms ; many learn the words of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Commandments, and Catechism, by rote, and never understand them, when a lively book that awakeneth their consciences, bringeth them to sensible consideration, and

to a true understanding of the same things, which before they could repeat without sense or savour. It is the catechetical truths which most of our English sermons press ; and the lively pressing them maketh them pierce deeper than a catechism.

If men that in life, or at death, give a stated revenue for good works, would settle the one half on a good English school, and the other half on some suitable good books, it might prove a very great means of public reformation. When a good book is in the house, if some despise it, others may read it ; and when one parish is provided, every year's rent may extend the charity to other parishes, and it may spread over a whole country in a little time. Most of the good that God hath done for me, for knowledge or conscience, hath been by sound and pious books.

III. A great means of public good is the right ordering of families all the week, but especially on the Lord's Day : though the ministry be the usual means of converting heathens and infidels, christian education by parents is the first means appointed by God for the holy principling of youth : parents must teach them with unwearied diligence, lying down and rising up. (Deut. vi. 11.) And they that will expect God's blessings must use his appointed means. Nature teacheth men and brutes to provide for their offspring with diligence and patience : and as grace teacheth believers to expect far greater things for themselves and their children than this world affordeth, so it obligeth them to be at so much greater diligence to obtain it. An everlasting kingdom deserveth more labour than a trade or full estate for the flesh. If all parents did their parts to make their children sanctified believers, as well as they expect the schoolmaster should do his part to make them scholars, and the master do his part to teach them their trades, we might hope that ministers would find them fitter for church work, and that godliness would not be so rare, nor so many wicked children break their parents' hearts. But of this I have spoken lately in my ' Counsel to Young Men.'

Religion is never like to prosper if it be not made a family work. If it be there made the business of the house, and done with reverent seriousness, and constancy, if magistracy and ministry should fail, yet families would propagate and preserve it. Begin with a reverent begging the help and blessing of God, then read

his word, and call upon his name ; speak serious words of counsel to inferiors ; spend the Lord's Day as much as may be in public worship, and the rest in reading godly books, and in singing God's praise, and calling on his name ; put suitable books into the hands of servants and children to read when they have leisure ; encourage them in it with love and rewards ; and keep them out of the way of temptation ; and then God's blessing will dwell in your families, and they will be as churches of God. If any complain of negligent ministers, or persecuting magistrates, and will not do their own family duties, which none forbid, they condemn themselves.

IV. If you would be public blessings, and do good to many, do your best to procure a skilful, faithful, ministry in the church :

1. Send no son to the university who doth not first show these three qualifications : a capable, natural wit and utterance ; a love to serious, practical religion ; a great desire to serve God in the ministry, though it should be in suffering from men. If they want any one of these, design them to some other calling ; devote not an indisposed lad to the ministry, in hope that God will make him better, but stay till he is better.

2. Seeing pastors are here obtruded upon the flock, it is a work of great importance, for religious gentlemen to buy as many advowsons or presentations as they can, that they may introduce the best that they can get.

God hath hitherto made use of the qualifications of the ministers as the special means for the welfare of his church. The bare title and office is so far from sufficing, without the skill and fidelity of the persons, that such have been the great corrupters and disturbers of the church. When pious men have heaped up riches and honours upon the clergy, these have been baits for the worst men to become seekers, and make the sacred ministry but a trade for wealth : and if carnal, worldly men be ministers, alas ! what plagues may they be to the people and themselves ! They will hate the spiritual practice of doctrine which they preach ; when they have told men of a heaven and hell, and the necessity of a holy heart and life, as if they had been in jest ; they will take those for hypocrites that believe them, and live accordingly : they will take the best of the flock for their enemies, because they are enemies to their hypocrisy and vice. Instead of imitating St. Paul, (Acts xx,) who taught

them publicly, and from house to house, day and night, with tears, they will turn the ministry into compliment and formality, and think, by saying a cold, unskilful sermon, and by roteing over a few heartless words, they have laudably performed their part. They will take those for their best hearers who will most honour them, and best pay them, though ever so ignorant and ungodly; and their spleen will swell against the best and most religious people, because they dislike their unfaithful lives and ministration. If religion should be in public danger, these will be the Judases that will sell it for gain. They will do any thing rather than suffer much. They are ministers of the world, and not of Christ: readier to make crosses for others than to bear the cross of Christ; for it is gain that is their godliness; and when their treachery is seen and hated, they will hate the haters of it; and the studies of malignant men will be their laboratories, and the pulpits the place where the sublimate and essence of malice must be vended. How effectually will Satan's work be done when it is performed in the formalities of the sacred ministry, and in the name of Christ! O what hath the Church suffered by a worldly, graceless ministry these thousand years, and more! and what doth it yet suffer by them in the east and west!

But, on the other side, a skilful, faithful minister will preach sound doctrine, and worship God with serious devotion, and live to Christ, and the church's good. He will speak the word of truth and life with truth and liveliness, as one that believeth what he saith, and feeleth the power of it on his heart. Though he must have food and raiment as other men, it is the saving and edifying of souls which is his work, to which he bendeth all his studies, for which he prayeth and longeth, and in which he rejoiceth, and to which all his worldly interest not only giveth place, but is made to serve. He will think no price, no pains or suffering too dear, so that the souls of men be saved; this is the riches and preferment which he desireth. He hath nothing too good or too dear for Christ, or for the meanest of his servants, when Christ requireth it. He is willing to spend and be spent for their sakes. It is them, and not theirs, that he desireth. He feareth the unbelief and hard-heartedness of his hearers, and lest they should reject their own salvation more than all the slanders or persecutions of their enemies. In a word, his heart, his study, his life and business, is to do all the good he can, and they that under such a mi-

nistry remain impenitent, and hardened in sin, are the most hopeless, miserable people in the world.

V. And it greatly conduceth to public good to keep up true order and christian discipline in the particular churches. Though popish church tyrants have turned the church keys into a military, reigning, or revenging sword, yet Christ did not in vain commit them into his ministers' hands. Religion seldom prospereth well where the church is no enclosure, but a common, where all sorts, undistinguished, meet; where, as the people know not who shall be made their pastors, but must trust their souls to the care of any that a patron chooseth, so the pastor knoweth not who are his communicating flock until he see them come to the Lord's table, no, nor when he seeth them. When it goeth for a sufficient excuse to the pastors if the rabble of wicked men communicate, or pass for his church members, though they communicate not, if he can but say, I knew them not to be wicked, (and how should he when he knew them not at all?) and that none accused them, when they are mere strangers to each other. In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature, and faith that worketh by love. And if Christ made his servants no better than the world, who would believe that he is the Saviour of the world? There will be some tares in Christ's field till his judgment cast them out for ever. But if it be not a society professing holiness, and disowning unholiness, and making a difference between the clean and the unclean, him that sweareth, and him that feareth, an oath, him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; Christ will disown them as workers of iniquity, though they had ate and drank with him, and done miracles in his name. (Matt. vii.) Much more if it be a society where godliness is despised, and the most godly excommunicated, if they differ but in a formality of ceremony from Diotrophes, and the wicked rabble tolerated and cherished in reviling serious godliness, on pretence of opposing such dissenters. Christ will not own that pastor nor society which owneth not conscience and serious piety.

If the pastors set up their wills and traditions before the laws and will of Christ, and call out, 'Who is on our side,' instead of 'Who is on Christ's side,' and fall out with the sheep, and worry and scatter them, and cherish the goats, and tolerate the wolves, wo to those shepherds, when Christ shall judge them! I wonder not if such incline to infidelity, though they live by

the name and image of Christianity, and if they be loth to believe that there will be such a day of judgment which they have so much cause to fear.

But the prudent, loving guidance of faithful pastors is so necessary to the church, that without it there will be envy and strife, confusion, and every evil work, and a headless multitude, though otherwise well-meaning, pious people, will be all wise, and all teachers, till they have no wise teachers left, and will crumble all into dissolution, or into shameful sects. St. Paul told us of two games that Satan hath to play, (Acts xx.) one by grievous wolves, that shall devour the flock, (though in sheep's clothing, yet known by their bloody jaws,) the other by men from among yourselves, who shall speak perverse things, to draw disciples after them.

VI. If you would promote the good of all or many, promote the love and concord of all that deserve to be called Christians.

To which end you must, 1. Know who those are; and, 2. Skilfully and faithfully endeavour it.

1. Far be it from any Christian to think that Christ hath not so much as told us what Christianity is, and who they be that we must take for Christians, when he hath commanded them all so earnestly to love each other. Is not baptism our christening? Every one that hath entered into that covenant with Christ, and understandingly and seriously professeth to stand to it, and is not proved by inconsistent words or deeds to nullify that profession, is to be taken for a Christian, and used in love and communion as such.

Consider of these words, and consider whether all churches have walked by this rule, and whether swerving from it have not been the cause of corruption and confusion.

He is a Christian fit for our communion, who is baptized in infancy, and owneth it solemnly at age; and so is he that was not baptized till he himself believed.

He is a Christian that believeth Christ to be true God and true man in one person, and trusteth him as our only Redeemer, by his merits and passion, and our Mediator in the heavens; and obeyeth him as our sovereign Lord, for pardon, for his Spirit, and for salvation. And as a Christian this man is to be loved and used, though he have not so much skill in metaphysics as to know whether it be a proper speech to call Mary the mother of God, or that one of the Trinity was crucified; or to know in what sense Christ's natures might be called one or

two; and in what sense he might be said to have one will or two wills—one operation or two; and know not whether the *tria capitula* were to be condemned: yea, though he could not define, or clearly tell, what *hypostasis persona*, yea, or *substantia*, signifieth in God; nor tell whether God of gods be a proper speech.

This man is a Christian, though he know not whether patriarchal, and metropolitical, and diocesan church forms, be according to the will of Christ, or against it; and whether symbolical signs, in the worship of God, may lawfully be devised and imposed by men; and whether some doubtful words, in oaths and subscriptions of men's imposing, being unnecessary, be lawful; and how far he may, by them, incur the guilt of perjury, or deliberate lying: and though he think that a minister may preach and pray in fit words of his own, though he read not a sermon or prayer written for him by others, who think that no words but theirs should be offered to God or man.

2. If Christ's description of a Christian be forsaken, and mere Christianity seem not a sufficient qualification for our love and concord, men will never know where to rest, nor ever agree in any one's determination but Christ's. All men that can get power will be making their own wills the rule and law, and others will not think of them as they do; and the variety of fallible, mutable church laws, and terms of concord, will be the engine of perpetual discord, as Ulpian told honest Alexander Severus the laws would be, which he thought to have made for sober concord, in fashions of apparel. Those that are united to Christ by faith, and have his sanctifying Spirit, and are justified by him, and shall dwell with him in heaven, are certainly Christians; and such as Christ hath commanded us to love as ourselves. And seeing that it is his livery by which his disciples must be known, by loving one another, and the false prophets must be known by the fruits of their hurtfulness, as wolves, thorns, and thistles, I must profess (though order and government have been so amiable to me as to tempt me to favourable thoughts of some Roman power in the church) I am utterly irreconcilable to it, when I see that the very complexion of that hierarchy is malice and bloodiness against men most seriously and humbly pious, that dare not obey them in their sinful usurpations, and that their cause is maintained by belying, hating, and murdering true Christians.

And, on the other side, too many make laws of love and com-

munion to themselves, and confine Christ's church within their little various, and perhaps erroneous, sects ; and all others they love with pity ; but only those of their cabin and singular opinions they love with complacency and communion : those that condemn such as Christ justifieth, and say that Christians are not his, are near of kin to one another, though one sort show it by persecution, and the other but by excommunication, or schismatical separation. " We are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iv. 28.) And, therefore, I advise all Christians to hate the causes and ways of hatred, and love all the causes and means of love. Frown on them that so extol their singular sentiments as to backbite others, and speak evil of what they understand not : especially such as pamphleteers of this age, whose design is weekly and daily to fight against christian love, and to stir up all men, to the utmost of their power, to think odiously of one another, and plainly to stir up a thirst after blood : never did Satan write by the hand of man if he do it not by such as these : the Lord of love and mercy rebuke them !

And take heed of them that can find enough in the best that are against their way to prove them dishonest, if not intolerable ; and can see the mote of a ceremony, or nonconformity to a ceremony, in their brother's eye, and not the beam of malice, or cruelty, in their own. Take heed of those that are either for confounding toleration of all, or for dissipating cruelty on pretence of unity.

That land, or church, shall never truly prosper where these three sorts are not well distinguished : 1. The approved, that are to be encouraged. 2. The tolerable, that are to be patiently and lovingly endured. 3. The intolerable, that are to be restrained. They may as well confound men and beasts, wise men and mad men, adults and infants, as confound these three sorts, in reference to religion.

I add this note to prevent objections, that though meekness and gentleness promote peace ; yet, to speak sharply and hatefully of hatred, unpeaceableness, and cruelty, and all that tends to destroy love, is an act of love, and not of an uncharitable, unpeaceable man.

VII. If you love the common good of England, do your best to keep up sound and serious religion in the public parish churches, and be not guilty of any thing that shall bring the chief interest of religion into private assemblies of men only tolerated, if you can avoid it.

Indeed, in a time of plagues, and epidemical infection, tolerated churches may be the best preservatives of religion, as it was in the first 300 years, and in the arians' reign, and under popery ; but where sound and serious religion is owned by the magistrate, tolerated churches are but as hospitals for the sick, and must not be the receptacle of all the healthful. And, doubtless, if the papists can but get the protestant interest once into prohibited or tolerated conventicles, (as they will call them,) they have more than half overcome it, and will not doubt to use it next as they do in France, and by one turn more to cast it out. The countenance of authority will go far with the vulgar against all the scruples that men of conscience stick at, and they will mostly go to the allowed churches, whoever is there. Let us, therefore, lose no possession that we can justly get, nor be guilty of disgracing the honest conformists, but do all we can to keep up their reputation for the good of souls : they see not matters of difference through the same glass that we do ; they think us unwarrantably scrupulous : we think the matter of their sin to be very great ; but we know that before God the degree of guilt is much according to the degree of men's negligence or unwillingness to know the truth, or to obey it ; and prejudice, education, and converse, maketh great difference on men's apprehensions. Charity must not reconcile us to sin, but there is no end of uncharitable censuring each other.

It hath made me admire to hear some men's words against comprehension, as they call it ; that they would not have rulers revoke that which they judge to be heinous sin in their impositions, unless they will revoke all that they think unlawful, lest it should strengthen the parish churches, and weaken the tolerated or suffering part ; I will not here open the sin of this policy as it deserves ; but I wish them to read a small book called, 'The Whole Duty of Nations,' said to be Mr. Thomas Beverley's.

VIII. If you love the common good, take heed lest any injuries tempt you into sedition or unlawful wars ; no man, that never tried them, can easily believe what enemies wars and tumults are to religion, and to common honesty and sobriety. Men are there so serious about their lives and bodily safety that they have no room or time for serious worshipping of God ; the Lord's day is by necessity made a common day ; and all men's goods are almost common to the will of soldiers ; either power seems to authorize them, or necessity to allow them, to use the goods of others as their own ; as if they were incapable of doing

wrong ; it is their honour that can kill most ; and how little place there is for love it is easy to conceive.

I doubt not but it is lawful to fight for our king or country, in a good cause. As nature giveth all private men a right of private self-defence, and no more, so the same law of nature, which is God's law, giveth all nations a right of public self-defence against its public enemies ; that is, against any that by his religion, or his own profession, bindeth himself to destroy that nation if he can, or by open arms seeketh no less than their destruction ; but as few calamities are worse to a land than war, so much is to be endured to prevent it. It is like a red-hot iron which fools lay hold on, thinking it is gold, till it fetch off skin and flesh to the bones, and perhaps set the house on fire. If your cause be bad, God will not be for you ; and he that so taketh the sword shall perish with the sword ; and if you bite and devour one another, you shall be devoured one of another. And, alas ! thousands of the innocent usually perish, or are ruined, in the flames that furious men do kindle ; no doubt as suffering in prison, so venturing in war, is a duty, when God calls you to it ; but in itself a prison is a far more desirable sort of suffering than a war. Therefore, between the danger of the miseries of an unlawful war, and the danger of betraying our king or kingdom, for want of necessary defence, how cautelous should all sober Christians be !

IX. If you would promote the common good, do your best to procure wise and faithful rulers.

Quest. What can private men do in this ?

Ans. 1. In cases where they have choosing voices they ought to prefer the best with greatest resolution, and not for slothfulness to omit their part, nor for worldly interest, or the fear of men, betray their country, as ever they would escape the punishment of the perfidious. Wo to that Judas that sells his country and conscience for any bribe, or by self-saving fear !

2. In other cases, where you have no choosing vote with men, you have a praying voice with God : pray for kings, and all in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. God hath commanded no duty in vain : do it earnestly and constantly, and hope for a good issue from God ; do it not selfishly that you may have prosperity or preferment by them, but sincerely for their own and the common good ; God is the fountain of power, the absolute sovereign of all the world ; men are but his provincial officers ; none claim-

eth an universal government of the world but one that pretendeth to be Christ's vicar-general, and none believe his claim but blinded men. There is no power but of and under God, who hath made rulers his ministers for our good, to be a praise to them that do well, and a terror to evil doers; that they that will not be moved with the hopes of God's future rewards, and the fears of his punishments, may be moved by that which is near them within the reach of sense. And all men regard their bodies, though only believers are ruled by the everlasting interest of their souls.

Therefore, pray hard for kings and magistrates; for if they be good they are exceeding great blessings to the world. They will remember that their power is for God, and the common good, and that to God they must give a strict account; they will take God's law for the only universal law to the world, and conform their own as by-laws to it. They will take their own interest to consist in pleasing God, and promoting the gospel and kingdom of Christ, and the piety and saving of men's souls. They will be examples of serious godliness, of justice and sobriety, trustiness, and temperance, and chastity to their subjects; in their eyes a vile person will be condemned, but they will honour those that fear the Lord. (Psalm xv. 4.) They will love those most that love Christ best, and most diligently obey him, and tenderly fear to sin against him; those please them best that please God best, and are most useful to the common good; they will set their hearts on the people's welfare, and are watching for all, while all securely live under their vigilancy. They will cherish all that Christ cherisheth, and especially the faithful pastors of the churches, that seek not the world, but the welfare of the flocks; when some are saying, 'In this mountain we must worship God, and some at Jerusalem,' they will teach them all to worship God in spirit and truth. When pastors and people grow peevish and quarrelsome for their several interests, opinions, and wills, a Constantine will cast all their libels into the fire, and rebuke the unpeaceable, and restrain the violent, and teach them to forgive and love each other, and will be the great justice of peace to all the churches in the land, and pare their nails that would tear and scratch their brethren; he will countenance the sound and peaceable, and tolerate all the tolerable, but will tie the hands of strikers, and the tongues of revilers; he will contrive the healing of exasperated minds, and take away the occasions of division, and rebuke them that call

for fire from heaven, or for the sword to do that which belongeth to the word, or to execute their pride and wrath ; godliness will have all the encouragement they can give it, and innocency a full defence ; malignity, and persecution, and perjury, and unpeaceable revenge, will be hateful where they rule ; and they had rather men feared sin too much than too little ; and would have all men prefer the law and honour of God to theirs ; where the righteous bear rule, the people rejoice. The wisdom, piety, and impartiality of their governors suppresseth profaneness, oppression, and contention, and keepeth men in the way of love and peace ; and as the welfare of all is the care of such a ruler above his own pleasure, wealth, or will, so he will have the hearts, and hands, and wealth of all with readiness to serve him : no wonder if such are called nursing-fathers, and the light of our eyes, and the breath of our nostrils, and the shadow of a rock in a weary land. As they bear the image of God's supereminency, and doubly honour him, they are doubly honoured by him ; so that the names of pious princes show not only the sense of mankind, but the special providence of God in making the memory of the just to be blessed ; and as they could not endure to see in their days ungodliness triumph, or serious godliness made a scorn, or conscience and fear of sinning made a disgrace, or the gospel hindered, and faithful ministers forbid to preach it ; so God will not suffer their consciences to want the sense of his love, nor their departing souls to fail of their everlasting hopes, nor their memories to be clouded by obscurity or reproach. Even among heathens what a name have those emperors left behind them who lived in justice, charity, and all virtue, and wholly studied the good of all ? What a wonder is it that M. Antonine should be so extolled by so many writers, and not one of them all, as I remember, speak one word of evil of him, save that a small short persecution of the Christians was made in his time, till he restrained it ! And all the people almost deified him, and would have perpetuated his line and name in the throne, but that the horrid wickedness of his posterity forced them to a change. What a name hath excellent Alexander Severus left behind him ! And what a blessing have wise, and godly, and peace-making christian princes been in divers ages to the world.

And both the inferior magistrates and the clergy usually much conform themselves, at least in outward behaviour, to their example ; for they will choose men of wisdom, conscience,

and justice, under them, to judge and govern. The bishops and pastors which they choose will be able, godly, laborious men; not seekers of worldly wealth and honour, nor envious silencers of faithful preachers, nor jealous hinderers of religious duties, nor flattering men-pleasers, nor such as lord it over God's heritage; but such as rule not by constraint, but willingly, as examples of love and piety to the flock. Pray hard, therefore, for kings, and all in authority, and honour all such as unspeakable blessings for the good of all.

But, on the contrary, wicked rulers will be Satan's captains against Jesus Christ, and men's sanctification and salvation. They will be wolves in the place of shepherds, and will study to destroy the best of the people, and to root out all serious godliness and justice. Conscience, and fearing sin, will be to them a suspected, yea, a hated thing. If any abuse it, it serves them for a pretence against it. They take the people's welfare and their own interest to be enemies, and presently look on those, whom they should rule and cherish, as the adversaries whom they must tread down. They will purposely make edicts and laws that are contrary to God's law, that they may have advantage to persecute the faithful, and to destroy them as disobedient. They will study to conquer conscience and obedience to God, lest his authority should be regarded above theirs. and Christ is used by them as if he were an usurper, and not their Sovereign, but were again to be taken for an enemy to Cæsar; and their hatred to true ministers will be such as Paul's accusers intimate, who said, "He preached another king, one Jesus." Wicked rulers will be the capital enemies to all that will be enemies to wickedness, and resolved to please God and save their souls. They will not be obeyed under God, but before him, nor served by the faithful servants of Christ, nor pleased but at the rate of men's damnation, by displeasing God. All men love their like. The worst men, if flatterers, will seem the best to them, and the best the worst and most intolerable, and church and state is like to be written by their copy. O what dreadful plagues have wicked rulers been to the world, and what a dismal case do they continue the earth in to this day! Not but that people, and especially priests, do contribute hereto, but the chief authors are men in greatest power. Five parts of six of the world at this day are heathens and infidels. And what's the cause? Rulers will not suffer the gospel to be preached to them. The eastern Christians were all torn

in pieces by the wickedness and contention of the governors of the state and church, banishing and murdering one another, so that when the Turks invaded them, the promise of liberty to exercise their religion tempted them to make the less resistance, thinking they could not be much worse than before. But the vulgar are so apt to follow the rulers, that ever since, the most of the Easterns are apostatized from Christ, and turned to Mahometanism, though in those countries where the Turk alloweth the christian people to have governors of their own, religion somewhat prospereth, yet where that privilege is denied them, and Turks only are their rulers, it withereth away, and comes to almost nothing.

And what keepeth out reformation, that is, the primitive simple Christianity, from the popish countries that have religion corrupted by human superfluities, but the seduction of priests, and the tyranny of rulers, that will not endure the preaching of the gospel, and the opening of the Scriptures to the people in a known tongue? How much holy blood have Roman and Spanish inquisitors, and French and Irish murderers, and most other popish rulers to answer for? Even Walsh, the papist, in his Irish history, tells us all, out of Ketin, and others, how commonly, for ages, they lived there in the sin of bloody wars and murders, yea, even when they professed great holiness. Wicked rulers are as the pikes in the pond, which live by devouring all about them. It is Satan's main design in the world to corrupt God's two great ordinances of magistracy and ministry, and turn them both against Christ's kingdom, and to destroy Christians in Christ's name. Oh! therefore, pray hard that all christian nations may have good rulers, and be very thankful to God for such.

X. And if you would be instruments of public good, know what are public sins and dangers, that you may do your part against them, and join not with any that will promise never to endeavour any reforming alteration. The chiefest are ignorance, pride, and self-willedness in teachers and people, malignant enmity to goodness, impatience with the infirmities of good men, judging of persons and things by self-interest, covetousness, sensuality, and taking Christianity but as the religion of the land, without diligent study to be rooted in the truth. And the scandals of hypocrites and tempted Christians hardening the enemies, especially by divisions, and public temerities, and miscarriages, is not the least.

XI. I would also, in order to public good, persuade serious Christians to be more zealous in communication with their neighbours, and live not over-strangely to others, and say not as Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Be kind and loving to all about you, and live not as unknown men to them; nor alienate them by sourness, contempt, or needless singularity, but become all things lawful, to all men, to save some; lend them good books, and draw them to hear God's faithful ministers; persuade them to pray in their families, even with a form or book, till they need it not.

XII. Lastly, if you would do good, be such as you would have others be, and teach them by examples of piety, charity, patience, self-denial, forbearing, and forgiving, and not by mere words contradicted by your lives. These are the materials by which you must do good to all.

VI. What now remaineth but that we all set ourselves to such a fruitful course of life? I greatly rejoice in the grace of God, which I daily see in many such of my familiar acquaintance, who study to do good to all, and to live in love, and peace, and holiness, by example, and by self-denial, and constant charity, using Christ's talents to their Master's ends, for the temporal and eternal good of many. But, alas! too many live as if it were enough to do no harm, and say, as the slothful servant, "Here is thy talent which I hid."

And some there be that, in a blind jealousy of the doctrine of justification, (not understanding what the word justification signifieth,) cry down even the words of James, as if they were irreconcilable with Paul's, and can scarce bear him that saith as Christ, (Matt. xii.) "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;" as if they had never read, "Well done, good and faithful servant," &c.; "For I was hungry, and ye fed me," &c. Nor Heb. v. 9. "He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;" or Heb. xiii., "With such sacrifice, God is well pleased;" or, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous;" or "That we shall be judged according to our works;" or Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city;" or Gal. vi. 7, 8, "What a man soweth, that shall he reap. He that soweth to the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap everlasting life:" with many such.

No man well in his wits can think that anything we do can

merit of God in commutative justice, as if he received anything from us. This were even to deny God to be God. But are we not under a law of grace. And doth not that law command us obedience, and the improvement of our talents in doing good? And shall we not be judged by that law? And what is judging, but justifying or condemning? No works of ours can stand the trial by the law of innocency or works, but only the perfect righteousness of Christ. But he that is accused of final impenitency, infidelity, hypocrisy, or unholiness, if truly accused, shall never be justified, and if falsely, must be justified against that charge by somewhat besides what is done out of him by Jesus Christ.

It is an easier thing to be zealous for an opinion, which is sound, or supposed such, about works and grace, than to be zealous of good works, or zealously desirous of grace. How sad use did Satan make of men's zeal for orthodox words, when the Nestorian, Eutychian, and Monothelite controversies were in agitation! He went for a hollow-hearted neuter that did not hereticate one side or other. And I would that factious, ignorant zeal were not still alive in the churches. How many have we heard on one side reviling lutherans, calvinists, arminians, episcopals, presbyterians, independents, &c., to render them odious that never understand the true state of the difference. And how fiercely do some papists and others cry down solifidians, and persuade men that we are enemies to good works, or think that they are not necessary to salvation, (because some rashly maintained that in a faction against George Major, long ago,) or at least that they are no further necessary, but as signs to prove that which God knoweth without them. And, on the other side, how many make themselves and others believe that the true expositors of Saint James's words are almost papists, and teach men dangerously to trust to works for their justification, while they understand not what either of the apostles mean by justification, faith, or works. Many so carefully avoid trusting to good works, that they have none or few to trust to. No doubt nothing of man must be trusted to for the least part that belongs to Christ, but all duty and means must be both used and trusted for its own part.

Consider well these following motives, and you will see why all Christians must be zealous of doing all the good they can.

1. It rendereth a man like to God to be good, and to do

good ; on which account Christ requireth it even towards our enemies, (Matt. v.,) that we may be perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect, who doth good even to the unjust ; and he that is likest God is the best man, most holy, and most happy, and shall have most communion with God.

2. And when Christ came down in flesh to call man home by making God better known to the world, he revealed him in his attractive goodness, and that was by his own beneficence to man. He came to do the greatest good ; to be the Saviour of the world, and to reconcile revolted man to God ; and all his life, yea, his death and heavenly intercession, is doing good to those that were God's enemies. And to learn of Christ, and imitate his example, is to be his true disciples. And what else do his laws command us ? They are all holy, just, and good ; and our goodness is to love them, and obey them. By keeping these we must show that we are his disciples. When he tells you who you must do good to, in the instance of the Samaritan, he addeth, " Go thou and do likewise." (John xv.) He largely tells us of what importance it is for every branch that is planted into him to bring forth fruit.

3. It is much of the end of all the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit. Grace is given us to use ; even natural powers are given us for action. What the better were man for a tongue, or hands, or feet, if he should never use them ? Life is a principle of action. It were as good have no life, as not to use it. And why doth God make men good, but that they may do good, even in their duty to God, themselves, and one another ?

4. It is God's great mercy to mankind, that he will use us all in doing good to one another ; and it is a great part of his wise government of the world, that in societies men should be tied to it by the sense of every particular man's necessity ; and it is a great honour to those that he maketh his almoners, or servants, to convey his gifts to others ; God bids you give nothing but what is his, and no otherwise your own but as his stewards. It is his bounty, and your service or stewardship, which is to be exercised. He could have done good to all men by himself alone, without you, or any other, if he would ; but he will honour his servants to be the messengers of his bounty. You best please him when you readily receive his gifts yourselves, and most fully communicate them to others. To do good, is to receive good ; and yet he will reward such for doing and receiving.

5. Self-love, therefore, should persuade men to do good to all. You are not the least gainers by it yourselves. If you can trust Christ, sure you will think this profitable usury. Is not a cup of cold water well paid for, when Christ performs his promise? And is it not a gainful loss which is rewarded in this life an hundred fold, and in the world to come, with life eternal?

Those that live in the fullest exercise of love, and doing good, are usually most loved, and many are ready to do good to them. And this exercise increaseth all fruitful graces: and there is a present delight in doing good, which is itself a great reward. The love of others makes it delightful to us: and the pleasing of God, and the imitation of Christ, and the testimony of conscience, make it delightful. An honest physician is far gladder to save men's lives or health, than to get their money. And an honest soldier is gladder to save his country, than to get his pay. Every honest minister of Christ is far gladder to win souls, than to get money or preferment. The believing giver hath more pleasure than the receiver; and this without any conceit of commutative meriting of God, or any false trust to works for justification.

6. Stewards must give account of all. What would you wish were the matter of your true account, if death or judgment were to-morrow? Would you not wish you had done all the good you could? Do you believe that all shall be judged according to their works? Did you ever well study that great prediction of Christ? Matt. xxv.

And it is some part of a reward on earth, that men that do much good, especially that to whole nations, are usually honoured by posterity, however they be rewarded by the present age.

7. Every true Christian is absolutely devoted to do good. What else is it to be devoted to God, our Creator and Redeemer? What live we for, or what should we desire to live for, but to do good?

II. But this exhortation is especially applicable to them that have special opportunity.

States are the capitals in the societies and public affairs of mankind. They are placed highest that they may have an universal influence. Though it be too high a word to call them gods, or God's vicegerents, (unless *secundum quid*,) yet they are his officers and regent ministers; but it is for the common good. In them God shows what order can do in the government of the world. As the placing of the same figure

before many, doth accordingly advance its value in signification, so it is a wonder to note what the place of one man signifieth at the head of an army, of a city, of a kingdom. They are appointed by God to govern men in a just subordination to God's government, and not otherwise. To promote obedience to God's laws by theirs, and by their judgment and execution to give men a foretaste what they may at last expect from God: and by their rewards and punishments to foretel men whom God will reward and punish: and by their own examples to show the subjects how temperately, and soberly, and godly, God would have them live. Atheists can see and fear a magistrate, that fear not God because they know him not.

They that prefer those as the most worthy of honour whom God abhorreth for their wickedness, and hate and oppress those whom God will honour, do show themselves enemies to him that giveth them all their power. And they that by countenance or practice do teach men to despise the fear of God, and to make light of drunkenness, whoredom, lying, perjury, and such like odious crimes, do, in a sort, blaspheme God himself, as if he who exalted them were a lover of sin, and a hater of his own laws and service. There are few rulers that are unwilling of power, or to be accounted great; and do they not know, that it is a power to do good that God has given them; and that obligation to do it is as essential to their office as authority? And that they who govern as the officers of God, and pretend to be liker him in greatness than their subjects, must also be liker to him in wisdom and goodness.

Wo to that man who abuseth and opposeth the just and faithful in the name of God, and by pretence of authority from him to do it! Wo to him that in God's name, and as by his authority, countenanceth the wicked whom God abhorreth, and under Christ's banner fighteth against him! As Christ saith of the offensive, "It were good for that man that he had never been born." (Prov. xxiv. 24.) "He that saith to the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse; nations shall abhor him." (Prov. xvii. 15.) "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.

God looketh for great service from great men; great trust and talents must have great account; a prince, a lord, a ruler, must do much more good, in promoting piety, conscience, virtue, than the best inferiors; to whom men give much, from

them they expect the more. It greatly concerneth such men seriously to ask their conscience, can I do no more to encourage godliness, conscience, and justice, and to disgrace malignity, brutish sensuality, and fleshly lusts, than I have done? O when they must hear, "Give account of thy stewardship, thou shalt be no longer steward," little think many rulers what an account it is that will be required of them! O what a deal of good may the rulers of the earth do, if, instead of over-minding their partial interests, and serving the desires of the flesh, they did but set themselves with study and resolution to promote the common good, by disgracing sin, and encouraging wisdom, piety, and peace! And where this is not sincerely done, as surely as there is a righteous God, and a future judgment, they shall pay for their omisive treachery. And if Satan do prevail to set his own captains over the armies of the Lord, to betray them to perdition, they shall be deepest in misery, as they were in guilt. One would think the great delight that is to be found in doing good to all, should much more draw men to desire authority and greatness, than either riches, or voluptuousness, or a domineering desire that all men should fulfil their wills.

II. The ministers of Christ also have the next opportunity to do good to many; and it is a debt that by many and great obligations they owe to Christ and men. But it will not be done without labour, and condescension, and unwearied patience. It is undertaken by all that are ordained to this office, but O that it were performed faithfully by all! What a doleful life would the perfidious soul-betrayers live if they knew what a guilt they have to answer for! Even the contempt of the people's souls, and of the blood of Christ that purchased them! O hear that vehement adjuration, (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2,) "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, preach the word; be instant, in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." Speak with holy studied skill; speak with love and melting pity; speak with importunity; take no denial; speak as St. Paul, (Acts xx.,) publicly, and from house to house; speak before you are silenced in the dust; speak before death have taken away your hearers. It is for souls, it is for Christ, it is for yourselves too: while you have opportunity, do good to all. But of this I have formerly said more in my 'Reformed Pastor.'

III. And let all men take their common and special oppor-

tunities to do good : time will not stay ; yourselves, your wives, your children, your servants, your neighbours, are posting to another world ; speak now what you would have them hear ; do them now all the good you can. It must be now or never ; there is no returning from the dead to warn them. O live not as those infidels, who think it enough to do no harm, and to serve their carnal minds with pleasure, as born for nothing but a decent and delightful life on earth. You are all in the vineyard or harvest of the Lord ; work while it is day, the night is at hand when none can work ; wo to the slothful, treacherous hypocrite when the judgment cometh !

Stay not till you are entreated to do good ; study it, and seek it. Give while there are men that need, and while you have it, especially to the household of faith. Fire and thieves may deprive you of it ; at the furthest, death will quickly do it. Happy are they that know their day, and, trusting in Christ, do study to serve him in doing good to all.

And the doctrine in hand doth further teach us some con-sectaries which all do not well consider.

I. That living chiefly to the flesh in worldly prosperity, and dropping now and then some small good on the by, to quiet conscience, is the property of an hypocrite. But to sound Christians, fruitfulness in doing good is the very trade of their lives, of which they are zealous, and which they daily study.

II. That all Christians should be very careful to avoid doing public hurt ; it woundeth conscience to be guilty of wronging of any one man ; we find it in dying men, that cannot die in peace till they have confessed wrongs, and made satisfaction, and asked forgiveness. And who knoweth but the many apparitions that have certainly been on such occasions may be done by miserable souls, to seek some ease of the torment of their own consciences ? But to hurt many, even whole parishes, cities, churches, kingdoms, how much more grievous will it prove ! And yet, alas ! how quickly may it be done : and how ordinarily is it done. What grievous mischief may even well-meaning men do by one mistaken practice, or rash act. By the fierce promoting one error ; by letting loose one passion, or carnal affection ; by venturing once on secret sin ; yea, by one rash, sinful word. How much more if they are drawn and set in an unlawful interest and way. And little know we when a spark is kindled how it will end, or how many ways Satan hath to improve it. And one hurtful action, or unwarrant-

able way, may blast abundance of excellent endowments, and make such a grievous damage to the church, who else might have been an eminent blessing. And if good men may do so much hurt, what have the enemies of godliness to answer for, who, by worldliness and malignity, are corrupters, dividers, and destroyers?

III. The text plainly intimateth that it is a great crime in them, that instead of doing good while they have opportunity, think it enough to leave it by will to their executors to do it. When they have lived to the flesh, and cannot take it with them, they think it enough to leave others to do that good which they had not a heart to do themselves; but a treasure must be laid up in heaven beforehand, and not be left to be sent after; (Matt. vi. 20, 21;) and he that will make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness must now be rich towards God; (Luke xii. 21;) it is no victory over the world to leave it when you cannot keep it; nor will any legacy purchase heaven for an unholy, worldly soul.

IV. Yet they that will do good neither living nor dying are worst of all. Surely the last acts of our lives, if possible, should be the best; and as we must live in health, so also in sickness, and to the last in doing all the good we can; and, therefore, it must needs be a great sin to leave our estates to those that are like to do hurt with them, or to do no good, so far as we are the free disposers of them.

The case, I confess, is not without considerable difficulties, how much a man is bound to leave to his children, or his nearest kindred, when some of them are disposed to live unprofitably, and some to live ungodlily and hurtfully. Some think men are bound to leave them nothing; some think they ought to leave them almost all; and some think that they should leave them only so much as may find them tolerable food and raiment. I shall do my best to decide the case in several propositions.

1. The case is not with us as it was with the Israelites, who might not alienate their inheritances from the tribes; yet even they had power to prefer a younger son, that was more deserving, before an elder, that was worse.

2. Where either law or contract have disabled a man to alienate his estate from an ungodly heir, there is no room for a doubt what he must do.

3. Nature teacheth all men to prefer a child that is pious and hopeful in his provisions and legacies, before a stranger that is

somewhat better, and not to alienate his estate for want of a higher degree of goodness.

4. When there is just cause to disinherit an elder son, a younger is to be preferred before a stranger ; or a kinsman, if there be no tolerable son.

5. And a son that ought not to be trusted with riches, or a great estate, yet ought to have food and raiment ; (unless he come to that state of obstinate rebellion in sin, for which God's law commanded the Israelites to bring forth their sons to be put to death ; in such cases the house of correction is fittest for them ;) yet should he have such food as may humble him, and not to gratify his lust.

6. If a man that hath the full power to dispose of his estate, real or personal, have sons and kindred, that, according to the judgment of sound reason, are like, if they had this estate, to do mischief with it, or maintain them in a wicked life, or in a mere unprofitable life of idleness, living only to themselves, and fleshly ease and pleasure, that man ought to give his estate from such to some that are more likely to do good with it, and to use it for God, and the public benefit.

This is much contrary to the common course of most, that think no estate too great for their heirs, nor any portion too great for their daughters, be they what they will, or what use soever they are like to make of it : but these following reasons prove it to be true.

1. Every man hath his estate from God, and for God, and is bound, as his steward, accordingly to use it. This is past doubt ; and how doth that man use it for God, who leaveth it to one that is likely to use it for the devil, in a fleshly, unprofitable life ? What account can such a steward give ? Did God give it you to maintain idleness and sin ?

Obj. O, but it is a son whom I am bound to provide for.
Ans. Are you more bound to your son than to yourself ? God doth not allow you to spend it on yourself, to maintain idleness and vice. (Rom. xiii. 13, 14.) "Make no provision for the flesh to satisfy the lust (or will) thereof." And may you leave it for such a use as is forbidden both your son and you ? It is God that is the owner of it, and it is to him that you must both use and leave it : "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." And will you leave it to be the fuel of lust and sin ?

Obj. I leave it not for sin ; but if he misuse it I cannot help

it. Ans. Would that excuse you if you put a sword into a madman's hand to say, I cannot help it if he use it ill? You might have helped it; it is supposed that you foreknew how he was like to use it.

Obj. But he may prove better hereafter, as some do. Ans. It is not bare possibilities that must guide a wise man's actions when probability is against them. Would you commit your children to the care of a madman, or a knave, because he may possibly come to his wits, or become honest? Have you not long tried him, and have you not endeavoured to cure him of his idleness, wickedness, or lust? If it be not done, what ground have you to presume it will be done when you are dead? You may have so much hope as not utterly to despair of him, but that will not allow you to trust him with that which God made you steward of for his use and service.

But if such hopes may be gratified, give your estate in trust to some conscionable friend, with secret order to give it your son, or kinsman, if he become hereafter fit to use it according to the ends for which God giveth it.

Reas. 2. The obligation in my text of doing good to all, extendeth to the end of our lives, and, therefore, to our last will and testament. Therefore, you must make your wills so as may do good to all, and not to cherish sin and idleness.

Reas. 3. You are bound to your best to destroy sin and idleness, and, therefore, not to feed and cherish it.

Reas. 4. Doing good is the very thing which you are created, redeemed, and sanctified for; and, therefore, you must extend your endeavours to the utmost, and to the last, that as much as may be, may be done when you are dead. If magistrates and ministers took care for no longer than their own lives, what would become of the state or church.

Reas. 5. The common good is better than the plenty of a sinful child; yea, it is to be preferred before the best child, and before ourselves, and, therefore, much more before the worst.

Reas. 6. It is a dreadful thing to be guilty of all the fleshly sins which your ungodly sons will commit with your estate, when they shall by it maintain the sins of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, if not to strengthen their hands for oppression or persecution, to think that they will spend their days in voluptuousness, because you give them provision for the flesh.

Reas. 7. It is cruelty to them that are already so bad to make

their temptations to sin much stronger, and their place in hell the worse, and to make the way to heaven as hard to them as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; to prepare them to want a drop of water in hell, who were clothed richly, and fared sumptuously on earth; to entice them to say, 'Soul, take thine ease, thou hast enough laid up for many years,' till they hear, 'Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul;' to cherish that love of the world which is enmity to God, by feeding that lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the world.

Reas. 8. When this preferring unprofitable and ungodly children before God and the common good is so common and reigning a sin in the world, it is a great fault for religious men to encourage them in it by their example, and to do as they.

Reas. 9. It is a sin to cast away any of God's gifts. When Christ had fed men by a miracle, he saith, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost:" if you should cast your money into the sea, it were a crime; but to leave to such as you foresee are most likely to use it sinfully is more than casting it away.

If you saw men offer sacrifice to Bacchus, or Venus, you would abhor it: do not that which is so like it, as to leave bad men fuel for fleshly lust.

Reas. 10. It is the more dreadful, because it is dying in studied sin, without repentance. To put so much sin into one's will, shows a full consent, and leaveth no room and time to repent of it.

On all these accounts, I advise all the stewards of God, as they love him, and the public good, and their own souls, while they have opportunity, even to the last breath, to do good to all, and to provide more for the common good than for superfluities to any, and than for the maintaining ungodly children in sin, to the increase of their guilt and misery.

Indeed, in the choice of a calling, employment, and condition of life, and place for their children, doing good should be preferred before their rising in the world: and they that justly endeavour to raise their families in wealth, honour, or power, should do it only that they might do the more good. But it is Satan's design to turn all God's mercies to the cherishing of wickedness, and even the love of parents to their children to the poisoning of their souls, the strengthening of their snares, and the hinderance of their own and other men's salvation. But it is shame and pity that they who in baptism devoted their chil-

dren to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil, as under the banner of the cross, should labour all their life, that impenitently at death they may leave all that they can get to such as, in all probability, will use it in pride, fulness, and idleness, for the flesh, the world, and the devil, against him and his interest, from whom they received it; and to whom both they and all they had were once devoted.

When men are loth that their estates should remove from the name and family, (for which there may be just cause,) I take it for the safest way, as aforesaid, to trust some, as men do their children with guardians, by the advice of lawyers, to secure all from their unworthy heirs, for the next, or some other of the name and lineage, that proveth worthy.

There are many other good works by which some rich men may be very profitable to the commonwealth, such as setting all the poor on work, and building hospitals for the impotent, &c.; but these this city is happily acquainted with already; and though still there be much wanting, yet there is much done.

V. But one more I will presume to name only to you that are merchants, for I am not one who have the ear of princes, who are more able. Might not somewhat more be done than yet is, to further the gospel in your factories, and in our plantations? Old Mr. Eliots, with his helpers in New England, have shown that somewhat may be done, if others were as charitable and zealous as they. The jesuits and friars showed us, in Congo, Japan, China, and other countries, that much might be done with care and diligence. Though the papal interest was a corrupt end, and all the means which they used were not justifiable, when I read of their hazards, unwearied labours, and success, I am none of those that would deprive them of their deserved honour, but rather wish that we who have better ends and principles, might do better than they, and not come so far behind them as we do, if half be true that Peter Maffæus, and the jesuits' epistles, and many other writers, tell us of them. I know that they had the advantage of greater helps from kings, and pope, and prelates, and colleges endowed with trained men and copious maintenance. But might not somewhat more be done by us than is yet done?

1. Is it not possible to send some able, zealous chaplains to

those factories which are in the countries of infidels and heathens; such as thirst for the conversion of sinners, and the enlargement of the church of Christ, and would labour skilfully and diligently therein? Is it not possible to get some short christian books, which are fitted for that use, to be translated into such languages that infidels can read, and to distribute them among them? If it be not possible also to send thither religious, conscionable factors, who would further the work, the case of London is very sad.

II. Is it not possible, at least, to help the poor ignorant Armenians, Greeks, Muscovites, and other Christians, who have no printing among them, nor much preaching or knowledge; and, for want of printing, have very few Bibles, even for their churches or ministers? Could nothing be done to get some Bibles, catechisms, and practical books printed in their own tongues, and given among them? I know there is difficulty in the way; but money, and willingness, and diligence, might do something.

III. Might not something be done in other plantations, as well as in New England, towards the conversion of the natives there? Might not some skilful, zealous preachers be sent thither, who would promote serious piety among those of the English that have too little of it, and might invite the Americans to learn the gospel, and teach our planters how to behave themselves christianly towards them, to win them to Christ?

IV. Is it not possible to do more than hath been done to convert the blacks that are our own slaves, or servants, to the christian faith? Hath not Mr. Goodwin justly reprehended and lamented the neglect, yea, and resistance of this work in Barbadoes, and the like elsewhere? 1. Might not better teachers be sent thither for that use? 2. Is it not an odious crime of Christians to hinder the conversion of these infidels, lest they lose their service by it, and to prefer their gain before men's souls? Is not this to sell souls for a little money, as Judas did his Lord? And whereas the law manumits them from servitude when they turn Christians, that it may invite them to conversion, (and this occasioneth wicked Christians to hinder them from knowledge,) were it not better move the Government, therefore, to change that law, so far as to allow these covetous masters their service for a certain time, using them as free servants? 3. And whereas

they are allowed only the Lord's Day for their own labour, and some honest Christians would willingly allow them some other time instead of it, that they might spend the Lord's day in learning to know Christ, and worship God, but they dare not do it, lest their wicked neighbours rise against them, for giving their slaves such an example; might not the governors be procured to force the whole plantation to it by a law, even to allow their infidel servants so much time on another day, and cause some to congregate them for instruction on the Lord's days? Why should those men be called Christians, or have any christian reputation, or privileges themselves, who think both Christianity and souls to be no more worth than to be thus basely sold for the gain of men's servilest labours? And what, though the poor infidels desire not their own conversion, their need is the greater, and not the less.

V. I conclude with this moving inference: The great opposition that is made against doing good by the devil and his whole army through all the world, and their lamentable success, doth call aloud to all true Christians to over-do them. O what a kingdom of malignants hath Satan, doing mischief to men's souls and bodies through the earth! hating the godly; oppressing the just; corrupting doctrine; introducing lies; turning Christ's labourers out of his vineyard; forbidding them to preach in his name the saving word of life; hiding or despising the laws of Christ, and setting up their own wills and devices in their stead; making dividing, distracting engines, on pretence of order, government, and unity; murdering men's bodies, and ruining their estates, and slanderer their names, on pretence of love to the church and souls; encouraging profaneness, blasphemy, perjury, whoredom, and scorning conscience, and fear of sinning. What diligence doth Satan use through the very christian nations, to turn Christ's ordinances of magistracy and ministry against himself, and to make his own officers the most mischievous enemies to his truth and kingdom, and saving work; to tread down his family and spiritual worship, as if it were by his own authority and commission. To preach down truth, and conscience, and real godliness, as in Christ's own name, and fight against him with his own word, and to teach the people to hate his servants, as if this pleased the God of love.

And, alas! how dismal is their success! In the East, the

church is hereby destroyed by the barbarous Mahometans : the remnants by their prelates continued in sects, in great ignorance, and dead formality, reproaching and anathematizing one another, and little hope appearing of recovery. In the West, a dead image of religion, and unity, and order, dressed up with a multitude of gauds, and set up against the life and soul of religion, unity, and order, and a war hereupon maintained for their destruction, with sad success : so that, usually, the more zealous men are for the papal and formal human image, the more zealously they study the extirpation of worshipping God in spirit and truth, and thirst after the blood of the most serious worshippers ; and cry down them as intolerable enemies who take their baptism for an obliging vow, and seriously endeavour to perform it, and live in good earnest, as Christianity bindeth them : and they take it for an insufferable crime to prefer God's authority before man's, and to plead his law against any thing that men command them. In a word, he is unworthy to be accounted a Christian with them, who will be a Christian indeed, and not despise the laws of Christ, and unworthy to have the liberty and usage of a man that will not sin and damn his soul : so much more cruel are they than the Turkish tyrants, who, if they send to a man for his head, must be obeyed.

And is the devil a better master than Christ ? And shall his work be done with greater zeal and resolution ? Will he give his servants a better reward ? Should not all this awaken us to do good with greater diligence than they do evil ? And to promote love and piety more earnestly than they do malignity and iniquity ? Is not saving church and state, souls and bodies, better worth resolution and labour than destroying them ?

And the prognostics are encouraging. Certainly, Christ and his kingdom will prevail. At last, all his enemies shall be made his footstool ; yea, shall from him receive their doom to everlasting punishment, which rebels against omnipotency, goodness, and mercy, do deserve. If God be not God, if Christ will not conquer, if there be no life to come, let them boast of their success : but when they are rottenness, and dust, and their souls with devils, and their names are a reproach, Christ will be Christ, his promises and threatenings all made good. (2 Thess. i. 6, &c.) He will judge it righteous to recompense tribulation

to your troublers, when he cometh with his mighty angels in flaming fire, to take vengeance on rebels, and to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all true believers. And when that solemn judgment shall pass on them that did good, and that did evil, described Matt. xxv., with a "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom," and "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Doing good and not doing it, much more doing mischief, will be better distinguished than now they are, when they are rendered as the reason of those different dooms.

TRUE CHRISTIANITY ;
OR,
CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE DOMINION,
AND
MAN'S NECESSARY SELF-RESIGNATION
AND SUBJECTION.
IN TWO ASSIZE SERMONS,
PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE JUDGE OF
ASSIZE, AT WORCESTER, AUG. 2, 1654.

“ For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”—Rom. xiv. 9.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE SERJEANT GLYN,

NOW JUDGE OF ASSIZE IN THIS CIRCUIT.

MY LORD,

COULD my excuse have satisfied you, this sermon had been confined to the auditory it was prepared for. I cannot expect that it should find that candour and favour with every reader, as it did with the hearers. When it must speak to all, the guilty will hear, and then it will gall. Innocency is patient in hearing a reproof, and charitable in the interpretation, but guilt will smart and quarrel, and usually make a fault in him that findeth one in them. Yet I confess this is but a poor justification of his silence that hath a call to speak. Both my calling and this sermon would condemn me, if, on such grounds, I should draw back, but my backwardness was caused by the reason which I then tendered your Lordship as my excuse, viz., because here is nothing but what is common, and that it is in as common and homely a dress. And I hope we need not fear that our labours are dead, unless the press shall give them life. We bring not sermons to church, as we do a corpse for a burial. If there be life in them, and life in the hearers, the connaturality will cause such an amicable closure, that through the reception, retention, and operation of the soul, they will be the immortal seed of a life everlasting. But yet seeing the press hath a louder voice than mine, and the matter in hand is of such exceeding necessity, I shall not refuse, upon such an invitation, to be a remembrancer to the world of a doctrine and duty of such high concernment, though they have heard it ever so oft before. Seeing, therefore, I must present that now to your eyes, which I lately presented to your ears, I shall take the boldness to add one word of application in this epistle, which I thought not seasonable to mention in the first delivery, and that shall be to your Lordship, and all

others in your present case, that are elected members of this expected Parliament. Be sure to remember the interest of your Sovereign, the great Lord-protector of heaven and earth. And as ever you will make him a comfortable account of your power, abilities, and opportunities of serving him, see that you prefer his interest before your own, or any man's on earth. 'If you go not thither as sent by Him, with a firm resolution to serve him first, you were better sit at home. Forget not that he hath laid claim to you, and to all that you have, and all that you can do. I am bold with all possible earnestness to entreat you, yea, as Christ's minister to require you, in his name, to study and remember his business and interest, and see that it have the chief place in all your consultations. Watch against the encroachments of your own carnal interests, consult not with flesh and blood, nor give it the hearing when it shall offer you its advice. How subtilly will it insinuate ! How importunately will it urge you ! How certainly will it mar all, if you do not constantly and resolvedly watch ! O how hard, but how happy is it to conquer this carnal self ! Remember still that you are not your own ; that you have an unseen master that must be pleased, whoever be displeased, and an unseen kingdom to be obtained, and an invisible soul that must be saved, though all the world be lost. Fix your eyes still on him that made and redeemed you, and upon the ultimate end of your christian race, and do nothing wilfully unworthy such a master, and such an end. Often renew your self-resignation, and devote yourself to him ; sit close at his work, and be sure that it be his, both in the matter, and in your intent. If conscience should at any time ask ' Whose work are you now doing ? ' Or a man should pluck you by the sleeve, and say, ' Sir, whose cause are you now pleading ? ' See that you have the answer of a Christian at hand ; delay not God's work till you have done your own, or any one's else. You will best secure the commonwealth, and your own interest, by looking first to his. By neglecting this, and being carnally wise, we have wheeled about so long in the wilderness, and lost those advantages against the powers of darkness, which we know not whether we shall ever recover again. It is the great astonishment of sober men, and not the least reproach that ever was cast on our holy profession, to think with what a zeal for the work of Christ men seemed to be animated in the beginning of our disagreements, and how deeply they did engage themselves to him in solemn vows,

protestations, and covenants, and what advantages carnal self hath since got, and turned the stream another way ! So that the same men have since been the instruments of our calamity, in breaking in pieces and dishonouring the churches of Christ, yea, and gone so near to the taking down, as much as in them lay, the whole ministry that stand approved in the land. O do not, by trifling, give advantage to the tempter to destroy your work and you together ! Take warning by the sad experiences of what is past, bestir you speedily and vigorously for Christ, as knowing your opposition, and the shortness of your time. ‘Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.’ If you ask me wherein this interest of Christ doth consist, I shall tell you, but in a few unquestionable particulars. 1. In the main, that truth, godliness, and honesty be countenanced and encouraged, and their contraries by all fit means suppressed. 2. In order to this, that unworthy men be removed from magistracy and ministry, and the places supplied with the fittest that can be had. 3. That a competent maintenance may be procured where it is wanting, especially for cities and great towns, where more teachers are so necessary in some proportion to the number of souls, and on which the country doth so much depend. Shall an age of such high pretences to reformation and zeal for the churches, alienate so much, and then leave them destitute, and say, it cannot be had ? 4. That right means be used, with speed and diligence, for the healing of our divisions, and the uniting of all the true churches of Christ at last, in these nations ; and O that your endeavours might be extended much further ! To which end I shall mention but these two means of most evident necessity. 1. That there be one Scripture creed, or confession of faith, agreed on by a general assembly of able ministers, duly and freely chosen hereunto, which shall contain nothing but matter of evident necessity and verity. This will serve, 1. For a test to the churches to discern the sound professors from the unsound, (as to their doctrine,) and to know them with whom they may close as brethren, and whom they must reject. 2. For a test to the magistrate of the orthodox to be encouraged, and of the intolerably heterodox, which it seems is intended in the 37th article of the late formed government, where all that will have liberty must profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, which, in a christian sense, must comprehend every true fundamental article of our faith, and, no doubt, it is not the bare speaking

of those words in an unchristian sense that is intended ; as if a ranter should say, that himself is God, and his mate is Jesus Christ.

2. That there be a public establishment of the necessary liberty of the churches, to meet their officers and delegates on all just occasions, in assemblies smaller or greater, (even national, when it is necessary,) seeing, without associations and communion in assemblies, the unity and concord of the churches is not like to be maintained. I exclude not the magistrates' interest, or oversight, to see that they do not transgress their bounds. As you love Christ, and his church, and gospel, and men's souls, neglect not these unquestionable points of his interest, and make them your first and chiefest business, and let none be preferred before him until you know them to be of more authority over you, and better friends to you, than Christ is. Should there be any among you that cherish a secret root of infidelity, after such pretences to the purest Christianity, and are zealous of Christ lest he should over-top them, and do set up an interest inconsistent with his sovereignty, and thereupon grow jealous of the liberties and power of his ministers, and of the unity and strength of his church, and think it their best policy to keep under his ministers, by hindering them from the exercise of their office, and to foment divisions, and hinder our union, that they may have parties ready to serve their ends ; I would not be in the case of such men, when God ariseth to judge them, for all the crowns and kingdoms on earth ! If they stumble on this stone, it will break them in pieces, but if it fall upon them, it will grind them to powder. They may seem to prevail against him awhile, when their supposed success is but a prosperous self-destroying, but mark the end, when his wrath is kindled, yea, but a little, and when these, his enemies that would not he should reign over them, are brought forth and destroyed before him, then they will be convinced of the folly of their rebellion. In the mean time, let wisdom be justified of her children.

My lord, I had not troubled you with so many words, had I not judged it probable that many more whom they concern may peruse them. I remain,

Your Lordship's servant in the work of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

August 5, 1654.

A SERMON

ON THE

ABSOLUTE DOMINION OF GOD-REDEEMER;

AND

THE NECESSITY OF BEING DEVOTED AND LIVING
TO HIM.

1 CORINTHIANS vi. 19, 20.

And ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

FUNDAMENTALS in religion are the life of the superstructure. Like the vitals and naturals in the body, which are first necessary for themselves and you also, for the quickening and nourishing of the rest; there being no life or growth of the inferior parts, but what they do receive from the powers of these: it is but a dead discourse, which is not animated by these greater truths, whatever the bulk of its materials may consist of. The frequent repetition, therefore, of these is as excusable as frequent preaching: and they that nauseate it as loathsome battology, do love novelty better than verity, and playing with words to please the fancy, rather than closing with Christ to save the soul. And as it is the chief part of the cure, in most external maladies, to corroborate the vital and natural powers, which then will do the work themselves, so it is the most effectual course for the cure of particular miscarriages in men's lives, to further the main work of grace upon their hearts. Could we make men better Christians, it would do much to make them better magistrates, counsellors, jurors, witnesses, subjects, neighbours, &c. And this must be done by the deeper impress of those vital truths and the good in them exhibited, which are adequate objects of our vital graces. Could we help you to wind up the spring of

faith, and so move the first wheel of christian love, we should find it the readiest and surest means to move the inferior wheels of duty. The flaws and irregular motions without, do show that something is amiss within, which, if we could rectify, we might the easier mend the rest. I shall suppose, therefore, that I need no more apology for choosing such a subject at such a season as this, than for bringing bread to a feast. And if I medicate the brain and heart, for the curing of senseless paralytic members, or the inordinate convulsive motions of any hearers, I have the warrant of the apostle's example in my text. Among other great enormities in the church of Corinth, he had these three to reprehend and heal: first, their sidings and divisions occasioned by some factious, self-seeking teachers. Secondly, their personal contentions by law-suits, and that before unbelieving judges. Thirdly, the foul sin of fornication, which some among them had fallen into. The great cure which he useth to all these, and more especially to the last, is the urging of these great foundation truths, whereof one is in the words before my text, viz., the right of the Holy Ghost; the other in the words of my text, which contains, first, a denial of any right of propriety in themselves. Secondly, an asserting of Christ's propriety in them. Thirdly, the proof of this from his purchase, which is his title. Fourthly, their duty concluded from the former premises, which is to glorify God, and that with the whole man, with the spirit, because God is a Spirit, and loathes hypocrisy; with the body, which is particularly mentioned, because it seems they were encouraged to fornication by such conceits, that it was but an act of the flesh, and not of the mind, and therefore, as they thought, the smaller sin. The apostle's words, from last to first, according to the order of intention, do express, first, man's duty to glorify God with soul and body, and not to serve our lusts. Secondly, the great fundamental obligation to this duty, God's dominion or propriety. Thirdly, the foundation of that dominion, Christ's purchase. According to the order of execution, from first to last, these three great fundamentals of our religion lie thus: First, Christ's purchase. Secondly, God's propriety thence arising. Thirdly, man's duty—wholly to glorify God, arising from both. The argument lies thus: they that are not their own, but wholly God's, should wholly glorify God, and not serve their lusts; but you are not your own, but wholly God's: therefore you should wholly glorify God, and not serve your lusts. The major is clear by the

common light of nature. Every one should have the use of their own. The minor is proved thus : they that are bought with a price, are not their own, but his that bought them ; but you are bought with a price : therefore, &c. For the meaning of the terms briefly ; *ἐστέ*, *vestri*, as the vulgar ; *vestri juris*, as Beza, and others, is most fitly expressed by our English, your own : “ ye are bought : ” a “ *synecdoche generis*, ” saith Piscator, for “ ye are redeemed with a price. ” There is no buying without a price. This, therefore, is an emphatical *pleonasmus*, as Beza, Piscator, and others ; as to see with the eyes, to hear with the ears. Or else, “ a price, ” is put for “ a great price, ” as Calvin, Peter Martyr, and Piscator, rather think : and therefore the vulgate adds the epithet *magno*, and the Arabic *pretioso*, as Beza notes, as agreeing to that of 1 Peter i. 18. I see not but we may suppose the apostle to respect both the purchase and the greatness of the price, as Grotius and some others do. “ Glorify God, ” that is, by using your bodies and souls wholly for him, and abstaining from those lusts which do dishonour him. The vulgate adds *et portate, q. d.* bear God about in your hearts, and let his Spirit dwell with you instead of lust. But this addition is contrary to all our Greek copies. Grotius thinks that some copies had *ἀπαρὸν θεόν*, and thence some unskilful scribe did put *ἀπα τε* : however, it seems that reading was very ancient, when not only Austin, but Cyprian and Tertullian followed it, as Beza noteth. The last words, “ And in your spirit, which are God’s, ” are out of all the old Latin translations, and therefore it is like out of the Greek, which they used : but they are in all the present Greek copies, except our manuscript, as also in the Syriac and Arabic version.

The rest of the explication shall follow the doctrines, which are these.

Doct. 2. Because we are so bought we are not our own, but his that bought us.

Doct. 3. Because we are not our own, but wholly God’s, therefore we must not serve our lusts, but glorify him in the body and spirit. In these three conclusions is the substance of the text ; which I shall first explain, and then make application of them in that order as the apostle here doth.

The points that need explication are these.

First. In what sense are we said to be bought with a price ? Who bought us ? And of whom ? And from what ? And with what price ?

Secondly. How we are God's own upon the title of this purchase.

Thirdly. How we are not our own.

Fourthly. What it is to glorify God in body and in spirit on this account.

Fifthly. Who they be that, on this ground, are or may be urged to this duty.

1. For the first of these, whether buying here be taken properly or metaphorically I will not now inquire.

First. Mankind by sin became guilty of death, liable to God's wrath, and a slave to Satan, and his own lusts. The sentence in part was past, and execution begun: the rest would have followed, if not prevented. This is the bondage from which we were redeemed.

Secondly. He that redeemed us is the Son of God—himself God and man, and the Father by the Son. "He purchased us with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.)

Thirdly. The price was the whole humiliation of Christ; in the first act whereof, his incarnation, the Godhead was alone, which, by humbling itself, did suffer reputatively, which could not really. In the rest, the whole person was the sufferer, but still the human nature really, and the divine but reputatively. And why we may not add, as part of the price, the merit of that obedience, wherein his suffering did not consist, I yet see not. But from whom were we redeemed?

Answer. From Satan, by rescue against his will; from God's wrath or vindictive justice, by his own procurement and consent. He substituted for us such a sacrifice, by which he could as fully attain the ends of his righteous government, in the demonstration of his justice and hatred of sin, as if the sinner had suffered himself: and in this sound sense it is far from being an absurdity, as the socinian dreameth, for God to satisfy his own justice, or to buy us of himself, or redeem us from himself.

2. Next let us consider how we are God's, upon the title of this purchase. By "God," here is meant both the Son, who being God, hath procured a right in us by his redemption, and also the Father, who sent his Son, and redeemed us by him, and to whom it was that the Son redeemed us. "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) In one word, it is God as Redeemer, the manhood also of the second person included, that hath purchased this right. Here you must observe that God, as Creator, had a plenary right of propriety and

government, on which he founded the law of works that then was. This right he hath not lost. Our fall did lose our right in him, but could not destroy his right in us. Because it destroyed our right, therefore the promissory part of that law was immediately thereupon dissolved, or ceased through our incapacity, and therefore divines say that, as a covenant, it ceased; but because it destroyed not God's right, therefore the preceptive and penal parts of that law do still remain. But how remain? In their being; but not alone, or without remedy: for the Son of God became a sacrifice in our stead; not that we might absolutely, immediately, or, *ipso facto*, be fully delivered, or that any man should, *ab ipsa hostia*, from the very sacrifice as made, have a right to the great benefits of personal, plenary reconciliation, and remission, and everlasting life; but that the necessity of perishing through the dissatisfaction of justice for the alone offences against the law of works being removed from mankind, they might all be delivered up to him as proprietary and rector, that he might rule them as his redeemed ones, and make for them such new laws of grace, for the conveyances of his benefits, as might demonstrate the wisdom and mercy of our Redeemer, and be most suitable to his ends. The word is now morally dead in sin, though naturally alive. Christ hath redeemed them, but will cure them by the actual conveyance of the benefits of redemption, or not at all. He hath undertaken to this end himself to be their physician, to cure all that will come to him and take him so to be, and trust him, and obey him in the application of his medicines. He hath erected an hospital, his church, to this end, and commanded all to come into this ark. Those that are far distant he first commandeth to come nearer, and those that are near he inviteth to come in. Too many do refuse, and perish in their refusal. He will not suffer all to do so, but mercifully boweth the wills of his elect, and, by an insuperable powerful drawing, compels them to come in. You may see, then, that here is a *novum jus, et dominii, et imperii*, a new right of propriety and rule, founded on the new bottom of redemption: but that this doth not destroy the old, which was founded on creation; but it is in the very nature and use of it an emendative addition. Redemption is to mend the creature, not of any defect that was left in the creation, but from the ruin which came by our defacing transgression. The law of grace upon this redemption is superadded to the law of nature given on the creation: not to amend any imperfections

in that law, but to save the sinner from its insufferable penalty by dissolving its obligation of him thereto : and thus, in its nature and use, it is a remedying law. And so you may see that Christ is now the owner, and, by right, the governor of the whole world, on the title of redemption, as God before was, and still is, on the title of creation.

3. By this you may also perceive in what sense we are not our own. In the strictest sense, there is no proprietary, or absolute Lord, in the world, but God. No man can say this is fully and strictly mine. God gives us, indeed, whatever we enjoy ; but his giving is not as man's. We part with our propriety in that which we give, but God gives nothing so. His giving to us makes it not the less his own. As a man giveth his goods to his neighbour to dispose of for his use, or instruments to his servant to do his work with, so God giveth his benefits to us : or, at the utmost, as you give clothes to your child, which are more yours still than his, and you may take them away at your pleasure. I confess, when God hath told us that he will not take them away, he is, as it were, obliged, in fidelity, to continue them, but yet doth not, hereby, let go his propriety : and so Christ bids us call no man on earth Father, that is, our absolute lord or ruler, because we have but one such master, who is in heaven. (Matt. xxiii. 7—10.) So that you see by this what propriety is left us, and what right we have to ourselves and our possessions. Even such, as a steward in his master's goods, or a servant in his tools, or a child in his coat, which is a propriety, improper subordinate, and *secundum quid*, and will secure us against the usurpation of another. One servant may not take his fellow's instrument from him, nor one child his brother's coat from him, without the parent's or master's consent. They have them for their use, though not the full propriety. It may be called a propriety, in respect to our fellow-servant, though it be not properly so as we stand in respect to God. We have right enough to confute the leveller, but not to exempt either us or ours from the claim and use of our absolute Lord.

4. What it is to glorify God in body and spirit ? I answer, in a word, it is when, upon true believing apprehensions of his right to us, and of our great obligations to him as our Redeemer, we heartily and unfeignedly devote ourselves to him, and live as a people so devoted ; so bending the chief of our care and study how to please him in exact obedience, that the

glory of his mercy and holiness, and of his wise and righteous laws, may be seen in our conversations ; and that the holy conformity of our lives to these laws may show that there is like conformity in our minds, and that they are written in our hearts ; when the excellency of the christian religion is so apparent in the excellency of our lives, causing us to do that which no others can imitate, that the lustre of our good works may shine before men, and cause them to glorify our Father in heaven. To conclude ; when we still respect God as our only absolute sovereign, and Christ as our Redeemer, and his Spirit as our sanctifier, and his law as our rule ; that the doing of his will, and the denying of our own, is the daily work of our lives, and the promoting of his blessed ends is our end : this is the glorifying of God who hath redeemed us.

5. The last question is, Who they be that are and may be urged to glorify God, on this ground, that he hath bought them ? Doubtless only those whom he hath bought ; but who are those ? It discourageth me to tell you, because among the godly it is a controversy ; but if they will controvert points of such great moment, they cannot disoblige or excuse us from preaching them. Among the variety of men's opinions it is safe to speak in the language of the Holy Ghost, and accordingly to believe, that, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men, to justification of life ;" (Rom. v. 18 ;) and, "That he gave himself a ransom for all, and is the only mediator between God and man." (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.) "That he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) "That God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." (1 Tim. iv. 10.) "That he is the Saviour of the world." (John iv 42 ; 1 John iv. 14, 15.) "That he tasteth death for every man," (Heb. ii. 9,) with many the like. It is sad to consider how men's unskilfulness to reconcile God's general grace with his special, and to assign to each its proper part, hath made the pelagians, and their successors, to deny the special grace ; and too many of late no less dangerously to deny the general grace ; and what contentions these two erroneous parties have maintained, and still maintain, in the church, and how few observe or follow that true and sober mean which Austin, the maul of the pelagians, and his scholars, Prosper and Fulgentius, walked in ! If when our dark confused heads are unable to assign each

truth its place, and rightly to order each wheel and pin in the admirable fabric of God's revelations, we shall, therefore, fall a wrangling against them, and reject them, we may then be drawn to blaspheme the Trinity, to reject Christ's human nature or his divine; and what truth shall we not be in danger to lose? To think this general grace to be inconsistent with the special, is no wiser than to think the foundation inconsistent with the fabric that is built thereupon; and that the builders themselves should have such thoughts is a matter of compassionate consideration to the friends of the church. Doubtless Christ died not for all alike, nor with equal intentions of saving them; and yet he hath borne the sins of all men on the cross, and was a sacrifice, propitiation, and ransom for all. Even they that bring in damnable heresies, deny the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter ii. 1.) "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 17—19.) I doubt not but my text doth warrant me to tell you all that you are not your own, but are bought with a price, and, therefore, must glorify him that bought you; and I am very confident, that if any one at judgment will be the advocate of an unbeliever, and say, he deserves not a sorer punishment for sinning against the Lord that bought him, his plea will not be taken; or if any such would comfort the consciences in hell, or go about to cure them of so much of their torment, by telling them that they never sinned against one that redeemed them, nor ever rejected the blood of Christ shed for them, and, therefore, need not accuse themselves of any such sin, those poor sinners would not be able to believe them. If it be only the elect with whom we must thus argue, 'You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God,' then can we truly plead thus with none till we know them to be elect, which will not be in this world. I do not think Paul knew them all to be elect that he wrote to, I mean, absolutely chosen to salvation; nor do I think he would so peremptorily affirm them to be bought with a price, who were fornicators, defrauders, contentious, drunk at the Lord's supper, &c., and from hence have argued against their

sins, if he had taken this for a privilege proper to the elect. I had rather say to scandalous sinners, ‘You are bought with a price, therefore, glorify God,’ than, ‘You are absolutely elect to salvation, therefore, glorify God.’ And I believe, that as it is the sin of apostates to “Crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh,” (Heb. vi. 5, 6,) so is it their misery, that “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, because they have trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing.” (Heb. x. 26—28.) Lastly, I judge it also a good argument to draw us from offending others, and occasioning their sin, that “Through us our weak brother shall perish for whom Christ died.” (1 Cor. viii. 11.) So much for explication.

I would next proceed to the confirmation of the doctrines here contained, but that they are so clear in the text, and in many others, that I think it next to needless, and we have now no time for needless work, and, therefore, shall only cite these two or three texts, which confirm almost all that I have said together. (Rom. xiv. 9.) “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) “We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.) “All power is given me in heaven, and in earth. Go ye, therefore, disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (1 Peter i. 17, 18.) “If ye call on the Father who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.” These texts speak to the same purpose with that which I have in hand.

Use. In applying these very useful truths, would time permit, I should begin at the intellect, with a confutation of divers contrary errors, and a collection of many observable consecretaries. It would go better with all the commonwealths and princes on earth, if they well considered that the absolute propriety and sove-

reignty of God-redeemer is the basis of all lawful societies and governments ; and that no man hath any absolute propriety, but only the use of the talents that God doth entrust him with ; that the sovereignty of the creature is but analogical, *secundum quid* ; improper and subordinate to God, the proper sovereign ; that it belongs to him to appoint his inferior officers ; that there is no power but from God ; and that he giveth none against himself ; that a theocracy is the government that must be desired and submitted to, whether the subordinate part be monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical ; and the rejecting of this was the Israelites' sin in choosing them a king ; that it is still possible and necessary to live under this theocracy, though the administration be not by such extraordinary means as among the Israelites ; that all human laws are but by-laws subordinate to God's. How far his laws must take place in all governments. How far those laws of men are *ipso facto* null, that are unquestionably destructive of the laws of God : how far they that are not their own, may give authority to others : and what aspect these principles have upon liberty in that latitude as it is taken by some : and upon the authority of the multitude, especially in church-government. Should I stand on these and other the like consequents, which these fundamentals in hand might lead us to discuss, I should prevent that more seasonable application which I intend, and perhaps be thought, in some of them, to meddle beyond my bounds, I will only say, that God is the first and the last in our ethics and politics, as well as in our physics ; that as there is no creature which he made not, so it is no good right of property or government which he some way gives not ; that all commonwealths not built on this foundation, are as castles in the air, or as children's tottering structures, which in the very framing are prepared for their ruin, and strictly are no commonwealths at all ; and those governors that rule not more for God, than for themselves, shall be dealt with as traitors to the universal sovereign. Thus far, at least, must our politics be divine, unless we will be mere confederate rebels.

But it is yet a closer application which I intend. Though we are not our own, yet every man's welfare should be so dear to himself, that methinks every man of you should presently inquire how far you are concerned in the business which we have in hand. I will tell you how far. The case here described is all our own. We are bought with a price, and, therefore, not our own, and, therefore, must live to him that bought us. We

must do it, or else we violate our allegiance, and are traitors to our Redeemer. We must do it, or else we shall perish as despisers of his blood. It is no matter of indifferency, nor a duty which may be dispensed with. That God is our owner by creation and redemption, and who doth hitherto keep our souls in these bodies, by whose mere will and power you are all here alive before him this day, will shortly call you before his bar, where these matters will be more seriously and searchingly inquired after. The great question of the day will then be this, Whether you have been heartily devoted to your Redeemer, and lived to him; or to your carnal selves. Upon the resolution of this question your everlasting salvation or damnation will depend. What think you then? Should not this question be now put home by every rational hearer to his own heart? But I suppose some will say, there is no man that wholly lives to God, for all are sinners; how then can our salvation depend so much on this? I answer in a word: Though no man pay God all that he oweth him, yet no man shall be saved that giveth him not the pre-eminence: he will own none as true subjects that do not cordially own him in his sovereignty. Be it known to you all, there shall not a man of you enter into his kingdom, nor ever see his face in peace, that giveth him not the chiefest room in your hearts, and maketh not his work your chiefest business. He will be no underling, or servant, to your flesh. He will be served with the best, if he cannot have all. And in this sense is it that I say the question will be put, in that great day by the Judge of all, whether God or our carnal selves were preferred? And whether we lived to him that bought us, or to our flesh? Beloved hearers, I will ask you whether you, indeed, believe that there will be such a day. I will take it for granted, while you call yourselves Christians, much less will I question whether you would then be saved or condemned. Nature will not suffer you to be willing of such a misery, though corruption make you too willing of the cause. But the common stupidity of the world doth persuade me to ask you this, whether you think it meet that men who must be so solemnly examined upon this point, and whose life or death depends on the decision, should not examine themselves on it beforehand, and well consider what answer they must then make? And whether any pains can be too great in so needful a work? And whether he that miscarrieth to save a labour, do not madly betray his soul unto perdition? As if such rational diligence were worse than hell, or

his present carnal ease were more desirable than his salvation ? Let us then rouse up ourselves, brethren, in the fear of God, and make this a day of judgment to ourselves. Let us know whether we are children of life or death. O, how can a man that is well in his wits enjoy with any comfort the things of this world, before he know, at least in probability, what he shall enjoy in the next ! How can men go cheerfully up and down about the business of this life, before they have faithfully laboured to make sure that it shall go well with them in the life to come ! That we may now know this without deceit, let us all, as in the presence of the living God, lay bare our hearts, examine them, and judge them, by this portion of his word, according to the evidence.

7. Whoever he be that takes not himself for his own, but lives to his Redeemer, he is one that hath found himself really undone, and hath unfeignedly confessed the forfeiture of his salvation, and finding that redemption hath been made by Christ, and that there is hope and life to be had in him, and none but him, as he gladly receives the tidings, so he cheerfully acknowledgeth the right of his Redeemer, and in a sober, deliberate, and voluntary covenant, renounceth the world, the flesh, and the devil, and resigneth up himself to Christ as his due. He saith, ‘ Lord, I have too long served thine enemies and mine own ; by cleaving to myself, and forsaking God, I have lost both myself and God, wilt thou be my Saviour, and the physician of my soul, and wash me with thy blood, and repair the ruins of my soul by thy Spirit, and I am willing to be thine ; I yield up myself to the conduct of thy grace, to be saved in thy way, and fitted for thy service, and live to God, from whom I have revolted.’ This is the case of all that are sincere.

By many Scriptures, we might quickly confirm this, if it were liable to question. “ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple : and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke xiv. 26, 27.) So verse 33 : “ Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Which is expounded, Matt. x. 37 : “ He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his

life for my sake, shall find it." (Matt. xvi. 24;) "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." (Psalm lxxiii. 25—27.) "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance," &c. (Psalm xvi. 5.) Moses refused honour, and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompense of the reward." (Heb. xi. 24—26.) I forbear citing more, the case being so evident, that God is set highest in the heart of every sound believer, they being in covenant resigned to him as his own. On the contrary, most of the unsanctified are Christians but in name, because they were educated to this profession, and it is the common religion of the country where they live, and they hear none make question of it, or if they do, it is to their own disgrace, the name of Christ having got this advantage, to be every where among us well spoken of, even by those that shall perish for neglecting him and his laws. These men have resigned their names to Christ, but reserved their hearts to flesh-pleasing vanities. Or if under conviction and terror of conscience, they do make any resignation of their souls to Christ, it comes short of the true resignation of the sanctified in these particulars.

1. It is a firm and rooted belief of the gospel, which is the cause of sincere resignation to Christ. They are so fully persuaded of the truth of those things which Christ hath done, and promised to do hereafter, that they will venture all that they have in this world, and their souls, and their everlasting state upon it. Whereas the belief of self-deceivers is only superficial, staggering, not rooted, and will not carry them to such adventures. (Matt. xiii. 21—23.)

2. Sincere self-resignation is accompanied with such a love to him that we are devoted to, which overtoppeth (as to the rational part) all other love. The soul hath a prevailing complacency in God, and closeth with him as its chiefest good. (Psalm lxxiii. 25, and lxiii. 3.) But the unsanctified have no such complacency in him; they would fain please him by their flatteries, lest he should do them any hurt, but might they enjoy but the pleasures of this world, they could be well content to live without him.

3. Sincere self-resignation is a departing from our carnal selves, and all creatures as they stand in competition with Christ

for our hearts, and so it containeth a crucifying of the flesh, and mortification of all its lusts. (Gal. v. 24 ; Rom. viii. 1—14.) There is a hearty renouncing of former contradictory interest and delights, that Christ may be set highest, and chiefly delighted in. But self-deceivers are never truly mortified when they seem to devote themselves most seriously to Christ ; there is a contrary prevailing interest in their minds, their fleshly felicity is nearer to their hearts, and this world is never unfeignedly renounced.

4. Sincere self-resignation is resolved upon deliberation, and not a rash, inconsiderate promise, which is afterwards reversed. The illuminated see that perfection in God, that vanity in the creature, that desirable sufficiency in Christ, and emptiness in themselves, that they firmly resolve to cast themselves on him, and be his alone, and though they cannot please him as they would, they will die before they will change their Master ; but with self-deceivers it is not thus.

5. Sincere resignation is absolute and unreserved : such do not capitulate and condition with Christ, ‘ I will be thine so far, and no further, so thou wilt but save my estate, or credit, or life.’ But self-deceivers have ever such reserves in their hearts, though they do not express them, nor, perhaps, themselves discern them. They have secret limitations, expressions, and conditions ; they have ever a salve for their worldly safety or felicity, and will rather venture upon a threatened misery which they see not, though everlastingly, than upon a certain temporary misery which they see. These deep reserves are the soul of hypocrisy.

6. Sincere self-resignation is fixed and habituate ; it is not forced by a moving sermon, or a dangerous sickness, and then forgotten and laid aside, but it is become a fixed habit in the soul. It is otherwise with self-deceivers ; though they will oblige themselves to Christ with vows, in a time of fear and danger, yet so loose is the knot, that when the danger seems over, their bonds fall off. It is one thing to be affrighted, and another to have the heart quite changed and renewed. It is one thing to hire ourselves with a master in our necessities, and yet serve ourselves, or run away, and another thing to nail our ears to his door, and say, ‘ I love thee, and therefore will not depart.’

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So much for the first mark of one that lives not as his^{own}, but as God's, to wit, sincere self-resignation. The second is this.

2. As the heart is thus devoted to God, so also is the life, where men do truly take themselves for his. And that will appear in these three particulars.

1. The principal study and care of such men is how to please God, and promote his interest, and do his work. This is it that they most seriously mind and contrive. Their own felicity they seek in this way. (1 Cor. vii. 32, 30; Rom. vi. 11, 13, 16; Col. i. 10, and iii. 1—3; Phil. i. 20, 21, 24.) It is not so with the unsanctified, they drive on another design. Their own work is principally minded, and their carnal interest preferred to Christ's. They live to the flesh, and make provision for it, to satisfy its desires. (Rom. xiii. 14.)

2. It is the chiefest delight of a man devoted to God to see Christ's interest prosper and prevail. It doth him more good to see the church flourish, the gospel succeed, the souls of men brought in to God, and all things fitted to his blessed pleasure, than it would do him to prosper himself in the world; to do good to men's bodies, much more to their souls, is more pleasing to him than to be honourable or rich. To give is sweeter to him than to receive. His own matters he respects as lower things, that come not so near his heart as God's. But with the unsanctified it is not so, their prosperity and honours are most of their delight, and the absence of them their greatest trouble.

3. With a man that is truly devoted to God, the interest of Christ doth bear down all contradicting interest in the ordinary course of his life. As his own unrighteous righteousness, so his own renounced carnal interest is loss and dung to him in comparison of Christ's. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) He cannot take himself to be a loser by that which is gain to the souls of men, and tendeth to promote the interest of his Lord. He serveth God with the first and best, and lets his own work stand by till Christ's be done, or rather owneth none but Christ's, his own dishonour being lighter to him than Christ's, and a ruined estate less grievous than a ruined church; therefore doth he first seek God's kingdom and its righteousness, (Matt. vi. 33,) and chooseth rather to neglect his flesh, his gain, his friends, his life, than the cause and work of Christ. It is far otherwise with the unsanctified, they will contentedly give Christ the most glorious titles, and full-mouthed commendations, (Luke vi. 46,) but they have one that is nearer their hearts than he, their carnal self must sway the sceptre. God shall have

all that the flesh can spare ; if he will be content to be served with its leavings, they will serve him, if not, they must be excused, they can allow him no more. The trying time is the parting time, when God or the world must needs be neglected. In such a strait, the righteous are still righteous. (Rev. xxii. 11.) But the unsteadfast in the covenant do manifest their unsteadfastness, and though they will not part with Christ professedly, nor without some witty distinctions and evasions, nor without great sorrow, and pretence of continued fidelity, yet part they will, and shift for themselves, and hold that they have as long as they can. (Luke xviii. 23.) In a word, the sanctified are heartily devoted to God, and live to him, and were they incapable of serving or enjoying him, their lives would afford them little content, whatever else they did possess. But the unsanctified are more strongly addicted to their flesh, and live to their carnal selves, and might they securely enjoy the pleasures of this world, they could easily spare the fruition of God, and could be as willing to be dispensed with for his spiritual service, as to perform it. And thus I have given you the true description of those that live to their Redeemer, as being not their own, and those that live to themselves, as if they were not his that bought them.

Having thus told you what the word saith, it followeth that we next inquire what your hearts say : you hear what you must be, will you now consider what you are ? Are all the people that hear me this day devoted in heart and life to their Redeemer ? Do you all live as Christ's, and not your own ? if so, I must needs say it is an extraordinary assembly, and such as I had never the happiness to know. O that it were so indeed ! that we might rejoice together, and magnify our Deliverer, instead of reprehending you, or lamenting your unhappiness. But, alas ! we are not such strangers in the world, as to be guilty of such a groundless judgment. Let us inquire more particularly into the case.

1. Are those so sincerely devoted to Christ ? And do they so deny themselves, whose daily thoughts, and care, and labour, is, how they may live in more reputation and content, and may be better provided for the satisfying of their flesh ? If they be low and poor, and their condition is displeasing to them, their greatest care is to repair it to their minds ; if they be higher, and more wealthy, their business is to keep it, or increase it, that hunt after honour, and thirst after a thriving and more

plenteous state ; that can stretch their consciences to the size of all times, and humour those that they think may advance them, and be most humble servants to those above them, and contemptuously neglect whosoever is below them ; that will put their hands to the feet of those that they hope to rise by, and put their feet on the necks of their subdued adversaries, and trample upon all that stand in their way ; that applaud not men for their honesty, but their worldly honours ; and will magnify that man while he is capable of advancing them, whom they would have scorned, if Providence had laid him in the dust : that are friends to all that befriend their interests and designs, and enemies to the most upright that cross them in their course : that love not men so much because they love God, as because they love them. Are these devoted to God, or to themselves ? Is it for God, or themselves, that men so industriously scramble for honours, and places of government, or of gain ? Will they use their offices or honours for God, that hunt after them as a prey, as if they had not burden enough already, nor talents enough to answer for neglecting ? Are those men devoted to God, that can tread down his most unquestionable interest on earth, when it seems to be inconsistent with their own ? Let the gospel go down, let the church be broken in pieces, let sound doctrine be despised, the ministers be hindered, or tried with vexations, let the souls of people sink or swim, rather than they should be hindered in the way of ambition ! I shall leave it to the trial of another day, whether all the public actions of this age, with their effects, have been for God or for self. This doth not belong to my examination, but to his that will thoroughly perform it 'ere long, and search these matters to the quick, and open them to the world. There were never higher pretences for God in an age, than have been in this ; had there been but answerable intentions and performances, his affairs and our own had been in much better case than they are ; but enough of this. Should we descend to men's particular families and conversations, we should find the matter little better with the most. Are they all for God that follow the world so eagerly, that they cannot spare him a serious thought ? An hour's time for his worship in their families, or in secret ? That will see that their own work be done ; but for the souls of those that are committed to their charge they regard them not ? Let them be ever so ignorant they will not instruct them, nor cause them to read the word, or learn a catechism ; nor will spend the Lord's peculiar day in such exercises ; and it is

much if they hinder not those that would. Is it for God that men give up their hearts to this world, so that they cannot have once a day or week, to think soberly what they must do in the next. Or how they may be ready for their great approaching change. Is it for God that men despise his ministers, reject his word, abhor reformation, scorn a church government, and deride the persons that are addicted to his fear, and the families that call upon his name? These men will shortly understand a little better than now they will do, whether, indeed, they live to God or to themselves.

2. If you are devoted to God, what do you for him? Is it his business that you mind? How much of your time do you spend for him? How much of your speech is for him? How much of your estates yearly is serviceable to his interest? Let conscience speak, whether he have your studies and affections; let your families be witnesses whether he have your speeches and best endeavours; let the church witness what you have done for it; and the poor witness what you have done for them; and the souls of ignorant and ungodly men, what you have done for them. Show by the work you have done who you have lived to, God or your carnal selves. If, indeed, you have lived to God, something will be seen that you have done for him; nay, it is not a something that will serve the turn, it must be the best. Remember that it is by your works that you shall be judged, and not by your pretences, professions, or compliments; your Judge already knows your case, he needs no witnesses, he will not be mocked with saying you are for him; show it, or saying it will not serve.

Methinks now the consciences of some of you should prevent me, and preach over the sharper part of the sermon to yourselves, and say, 'I am the man that have lived to myself,' and so consider of the consequence of such a life; but I will leave this to your meditation, when you go home, and next proceed to the exhortative part of application.

Men, brethren, and fathers, the business that I come hither upon is to proclaim God's right to you, and all that is yours, even his new right of redemption, supposing that of creation; and to let you know, that you are all bought with a price, and therefore are not your own, but his that bought you, and must accordingly be dedicated and live to him. Honourable and Worshipful, and all men, of what degree soever, I do here, on the behalf and in the name of Christ, lay claim to you all, to your souls and bodies, to all your faculties, abilities, and interests, on

the title of redemption; all is God's. Do you acknowledge his title, and consent unto his claim? What say you? Are you his; or, are you not? Dare you deny it? If any man dare be so bold, I am here ready to make good the claim of Christ. If you dare not deny it, we must take it as confessed. Bear witness all, that God laid claim to you and yours, and no man durst deny his title. I do next, therefore, require you, and command you, in his name, give him his own; render to God the things that are God's. Will you this day renounce your carnal selves, and freely confess you are not your own; and cheerfully and unreservedly resign yourselves to God, and say, as Jos. xxiv. 15, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord?" Do not ask what God will do with you; or how he will use you, or dispose of you. Trust him for that, and obey his will. Fear not evil from the chiefest good, unless it be in neglecting or resisting him. Be sure of it, God will use you better than Satan would, or than this world would, or better than you have used, or would use, yourselves. He will not employ you in dishonourable drudgeries, and then dash you in pieces. He will not seduce you with swinish sensualities, and keep you in play with childish vanities, till you drop into damnation before you are aware: nor will he lull you asleep in presumptuous security, till you unexpectedly awake in unquenchable fire. You need not fear such dealing as this from him: "His commandments are not grievous." (1 John v. 3.). "His yoke is easy, his burden is light, and tendeth to the perfect rest of the soul." (Matt. xi. 28—30.) What say you? Will you hereafter be his; unfeignedly his? Resolvedly, unreservedly, and constantly his? Or will you not take heed, "that you refuse not him that speaketh." (Heb. xii. 25.) Reject not, neglect not, this offer, lest you never have another on the like terms again: he is willing to pardon all that is past, and put up with all the wrongs that you have done him, so you will but repent of them; and now at last be heartily and entirely his; not only in tongue, but in deed and life. Well, I have proclaimed God's right to you; I have offered you his gracious acceptance; if yet you demur, or sleepily neglect it, or obstinately resist him, take that you get by it; remember you perish not without warning. The confession of Christ's right, which this day you have been forced to, shall remain as on record, to the confusion of your faces; and you shall then be forced to remember, though you had rather forget it, what now you are forced to confess, though you had rather you could deny it. But I am loth to leave you to

this prognostic, or to part on terms so sad to your souls, and sad to me ; I will add, therefore, some reasons to persuade you to submit : and though it be not in my power to follow them so to your hearts as to make them effectual, yet I shall do my part in propounding them, and leave them to God to set them home, beseeching him that maketh, new maketh, openeth, and softeneth hearts at his pleasure, to do these blessed works on yours, and to persuade you within, while I am persuading you without, that I may not lose my labour and my hopes, nor your souls, nor God his due.

1. Consider the fulness of God's right to you ; no creature is capable of the like. He made you of nothing, and, therefore, you have nothing which is not his. He redeemed you when you were fallen to worse than nothing. Had not Christ ransomed you by being a sacrifice for your sin, you had been hopelessly left to everlasting perdition ; give him, therefore, his own which he hath so dearly bought. (1 Peter i. 18.)

2. Consider that you have no right of propriety to yourselves ; if you have, how came you by it ? Did you make yourselves ? Did you redeem yourselves ? Do you maintain and preserve yourselves ? If you are your own, tell God you will not be beholden to him for his preservation ; why cannot you preserve yourselves in health if you are your own ? Why cannot you recover yourselves from sickness ? Is it yourselves that gives power to your food to nourish you ? to the earth to bear you, and furnish you with necessities ? to the air to cool and recreate your spirits ? If you are your own, save yourselves from sickness and death ; keep back your age ; deliver your souls from the wrath of God ; answer his pure justice for your own sins ; never plead the blood of a Redeemer, if you are your own. If you can do these things I will yield that you are your own. But no man can ransom his soul from death, it cost a dearer price than so. (Act xx. 28.) You are not debtors, therefore, to the flesh, to live after it, (Rom. viii. 12,) but to him that died, to subdue the flesh. (Rom. vi. 11.)

3. None else can claim any title to you, further than under God upon his gift. Men did not create you or redeem you, "Be not, therefore, the servants of men," (1 Cor. vii. 23,) unless it be under Christ, and for him. Certainly Satan did not create you, or redeem you ; what right then hath he to you, that he should be served ?

4. Seeing then that you are God's, and his alone, is it not the most heinous thievery to rob him of his right ? If they must

be hanged that rob men of so small a thing as earthly necessities, wherein they have but an improper derived propriety, what torments do those deserve that rob God of so precious a creature, that cost him so dear, and might be so useful, and wherein he hath so full and unquestionable propriety ; the greatest, the richest, and wisest men that are trusted with most, are the greatest robbers on earth, if they live not to God, and shall have the greatest punishment.

5. Is it not incomparably more honourable to be God's, than to be your own ; and to live to him than to yourselves ? The object and end doth nobilitate the act, and thereby the agent. It is more honourable to serve a prince than a ploughman. That man that least seeks his own honour or carnal interest, but most freely denieth it, and most entirely seeks the honour of God, is the most highly honoured with God and good men, when self-seekers defraud themselves of their hopes. Most men think vilely, or at least suspiciously, of that man that seeks for honour to himself ; they think if the matter were combustible he need not to blow the fire so hard ; if he were worthy of honour, his worth would attract it by a sweet, magnetic power ; so much industry they think is the most probable mark of indignity, and of some consciousness of it in the seeker's breast. If he attain some of his ends, men are ready to look on his honour but as alms, which he was fain to beg for before he got it. And could he make shift to ascend the throne, so much in the eyes of the wisest men would be detracted from his honour, as they did believe himself to have a hand in contriving it, *quod sequitur fugio*, &c. They honour him more that refuseth a crown when it is offered, than him that ambitiously aspireth after it, or rapaciously apprehendeth it. If they see a man much desire their applause, they think he needeth it rather than deserveth it. Solomon saith, "To search their own glory is not glory." (Prov. xxv. 27.)

6. You can never have a better master than God, nor yet a sweeter employment than his service. There is nothing in him that may be the least discouragement to you, nor in his works that should be distasteful. The reason why the world thinks otherwise, is because of the distempered averseness of their souls. A sick stomach is no fit judge of the pleasantness of meats. To live to God is to live to the truest and highest delights. His kingdom is not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. His servants, indeed, are often troubled ; but ask them the reason, and they

will quickly tell you that it is not for being his servants, or for serving him too much ; but for fear lest they are not his servants, or for serving him no better. It is not in his ways, or at least not for them, that they meet with their perplexities, but in stepping out of them, and wandering in their own. Many, besides the servants of God, do seek felicity and satisfaction to their minds, and some discover where it lieth ; but only they attain it, and enjoy it.

But, on the contrary, he hath an ill master that is ruled by himself. A master that is blind, and proud, and passionate, that will lead you unto precipices, and thence deject you ; that will most effectually ruin you when he thinks he is doing you the greatest good ; whose work is bad, and his wages no better ; that feedeth his servants in plenty but as swine, and in the day of famine denieth them the husks. Whatever you may now imagine while you are distracted with sensuality, I dare say, if ever God bring you to yourselves, you will consider that it is better to be in your Father's house, where the poorest servant hath bread enough, than to be fed with dreams and pictures, and to perish with hunger. Reject not God till you have found a better master.

7. If you will needs be your own, and seek yourselves, you disengage God from dealing with you as his in a gracious sense. If you will not trust him, nor venture yourselves upon his promise and conduct, but will shift for yourselves, then look to yourselves as well as you can ; save yourselves in danger, cure your own diseases, quiet your own consciences, grapple with death in your own strength, plead your own cause in judgment, and save yourselves from hell if you can ; and when you have done, go and boast of your own sufficiency and achievements, and tell men how little you were beholden to Christ. Wo to you, if, upon these provocations, God should give you over to provide for yourselves, and leave you without any other salvation than your own power is able to effect. Mark the connexion of this sin and punishment in Deut. xxxii. 18—20. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters : and he said, " I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be." As if he should say, I will see how well they can save themselves, and make them know by experience their own insufficiency.

8. Those men that seek themselves, and live to themselves, and not to God, are unfaithful and treacherous both to God and man. As they neglect God in prosperity, so they do but flatter him in adversity. (Psalm lxxviii. 34—37.) And he that will be false to God, whose interest in him is so absolute, is unlikely to be true to men, whose interest in him is infinitely less: he that can shake off the great obligations of creation, redemption, preservation, and provision, which God layeth on him, is unlikely to be held by such slender obligations as he receives from men. I will never trust that man far, if I know him, that is false to his Redeemer. He that will sell his God, his Saviour, his soul, and heaven for a little sensuality, vain glory, or worldly wealth, I shall not wonder if he sell his best friend for a groat. Self-seeking men will take you for their friend no longer than you serve their turns; but if once you need them, or stand in their way, you shall find what they esteemed you for. He that is in haste to be rich, and thereupon respecteth persons for a piece of bread, that man will transgress, saith Solomon. (Prov. xxviii. 20, 21.)

9. Sanctification consisteth in your hearty resignation and living to God; and therefore you are unsanctified if you are destitute of this. “Without holiness none shall see God.” (Heb. xii. 14.) And what is holiness, but our sincere dedication and devotedness to God? Being no longer common and unclean, but separated in resolution, affection, and conversation, from the world and our carnal selves to him. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to work you to this; and if you resist and refuse it, you do not soundly believe in the Holy Ghost, but instead of believing in him you fight against him.

10. You are verbally devoted to Christ in solemn covenant, entered into in baptism, and frequently renewed in the Lord’s supper, and at other seasons. Did you not there solemnly, by your parents, resign yourself to Christ as his? And renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil, and promise to fight under Christ’s banner against them to your lives’ end? O happy person that performeth this covenant, and everlastingly miserable are they that do not. *Fides non recepta, sed custodita vivificat*, saith Cyprian. It is not covenant-making, without covenant-keeping, that is like to save you. Do you stand to the covenant that you made by your parents? Or do you disclaim it? If you disclaim it, you renounce your part in Christ, and his benefits in that covenant made over to you. If you stand to it, you must perform your promise, and live to God, to whom you were

resigned. To take God's oath of allegiance so solemnly, and afterward to turn to his enemies which we renounced, is a rebellion that shall not be always unrevenged.

11. God's absolute dominion and sovereignty over us is the very foundation of all religion, even of that little which is found left among infidels and pagans, much more evidently of the saving religion of Christians. He that dare say he believeth not this, will never, sure, have the face to call himself a Christian. Is it not a matter of most sad consideration, that ever so many millions should think to be saved by a doctrine which they believe not, or by a religion that never went deeper than the brain, and is openly contradicted by the tenour of their lives? Is a true religion enough to save you, if you be not true to that religion? How do men make shift to quiet their consciences in such gross hypocrisy? Is there a man to be found in this congregation that will not confess that he is rightfully his Redeemer's? But hath he indeed their hearts, their time, their strength, and their interest? Follow some of them from morning to night, and you shall not hear one serious word for Christ, nor see any serious endeavours for his interest: and yet men will profess that they are his. How sad a case is it, that men's own confessions should condemn them, and that which they called their religion should judge them to that everlasting misery which they thought it would have saved them from! And how glorious would the christian religion appear if men were true to it; if Christ's doctrine had its full impression on their hearts, and were expressed in their lives. Is he not an excellent person that denieth himself, and doth all for God: that goeth on no business but God's: that searcheth out God's interest in every part of his calling and employment; and intendeth that, "whether he eat or drink, or whatever he doth, doth all to the glory of God;" (1 Cor. x. 31;) that can say, as Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" (Gal. ii. 20;) and "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ;" (Phil. iii. 7, 8;) and "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 21.) Perhaps you think that the degree of these examples is inimitable by us: but I am sure all that will be saved must imitate them in the truth.

12. Self-seeking is self-losing, and delivering up yourself, and all you have to God, is the only way to save yourselves, and to secure all. The more you are his, the more you are your own indeed; and the more you deliver to him, and expend for him, the greater is your gain. These paradoxes are familiar, tried truths to the true believer: these are his daily food and exercise which seem to others such scorpions as they dare not touch, or such stones as they are not able to digest. He knoweth that self-humbling is the true self-exalting, and self-exalting is the infallible way to be brought low. (Luke xiv. 11, and xviii. 14; Matt. xxiii. 12.) He believeth that there is a losing of life which saves it, and a saving of it which certainly loseth it. (Matt. x. 39, and xvi. 25.) O that I could reach the hearts of self-seekers, that spend their care and time for their bodies, and live not unto God! That I were but able to make them see the issue of their course, and what it would profit them to "win all the world, and lose their own souls." O all you busy men of this world, hearken to the proclamation of him that bought you; "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters! Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently to me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." (Isaiah lv. 1—3.) O, sirs, what a deal of care and labour do you lose! How much more gainfully might your lives be improved? Godliness with contentment "is the great gain." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) That which you now think you make your own, will shortly prove to be least your own; and that is most lost which you so carefully labour for. You that are now so idly busy in gathering together the treasure of an ant-hillock, and building children's tottering piles, do you forget that the foot of death is coming to spurn it all abroad, and tread down you and it together? You spend the day of life and visitation in painting your phantasies with the images of felicity, and in dressing yourselves, and feathering your nest with that which you impiously steal from God; and do you forget that the night of blackness is at hand, when God will undress you of your temporary contents, and deplume you of all your borrowed bravery. How easily, how speedily, how certainly will he do it. Read over your case in Luke xii. 16—22. How can you

make shift to read such texts, and not perceive that they speak to you? When you are pulling down and building up, and contriving what to do with your fruits, and saying to yourselves, 'I have so much now as may serve me so many years, I will take mine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Remember, then, the conclusion: but God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?" So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. 'Are these things yours or mine? (saith God.) Whose are they? If they are yours, keep them now if you can: either stay with them, or take them with you.' But God will make you know that they are his, and disrobe such men as thieves, who are adorned with that which is none of their own. 'This honour, (saith God,) is mine; thou hast stolen it from me: this wealth is mine; this life, and all is mine;' only thyself he will not own. They shall require thy soul that have conquered and ruled it. Though it was his by the right of creation and redemption, yet seeing it was not his by a free dedication, he will not own it as to everlasting salvation, but say, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. vii. 23.) O with what hearts then will self-seeking gentlemen part with their honours and estates, and the earthly minded with their beloved possessions! When he that resigned all to God, and devoted himself and all to his service, shall find his consumed estate to be increased, his neglected honour abundantly repaired, and in this life he shall receive an hundred fold, and in the world to come eternal life. (Matt. x. 30; John iv. 56; 1 Tim. vi. 12, 19.)

13. Lastly: consider, when judgment comes, inquiry will be made whether you have lived as your own, or as his that bought you. Then he will require his own with improvement. (Luke xix. 25.) The great business of that day will be, not so much to search after particular sins, or duties, which were contrary to the scope of heart and life; but to know whether you lived to God, or to your flesh. Whether your time, and care, and wealth, were expended for Christ in his members and interest, or for your carnal selves. (Matt. xxv.) Inasmuch as you did it not to these, you did it not to him. You that Christ hath given authority to shall then be accountable whether you improved it to his advantage. You that he hath given honour to must then give account whether you improved it to his honour. In the fear of God, Sirs, cast up your accounts in time, and bethink

you what answer will then stand good : it will be a doleful hearing to a guilty soul, when Christ shall say, ‘ I gave thee thirty or forty years’ time : thy flesh had so much in eating and drinking, and sleeping, and labouring, in idleness, and vain talking, and recreations, and other vanities : but where was my part ? How much was laid out for the promotion of my glory ? I lent you so much of the wealth of the world ; so much was spent on your backs, and so much on your bellies, so much on costly toys or superfluities, so much in revengeful suits and contentions, and so much was left behind for your posterity ; but where was my part ? How much was laid out to further the gospel, and to relieve the souls or the bodies of your brethren ? I gave thee a family, and committed them to thy care to govern them for me, and fit them for my service ; but how didst thou perform it ? O, brethren, bethink you in time what answer to make to such interrogatories ; your Judge hath told you that your doom must then pass according as you have improved your talents for him ; and that he that hideth his talent, though he give God his own, “ shall be cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. xxv. 30.) How easily will Christ then evince his right in you, and convince you that it was your duty to have lived unto him ? Do you think, Sirs, that you shall then have the face to say, ‘ I thought, Lord, that I had been made and redeemed for myself ? I thought I had nothing to do on earth, but live in as much plenty as I could, and pleasure to my flesh, and serve thee on the by, that thou mightest continue my prosperity, and save me when I could keep the world no longer. I knew not that I was thine, and should have lived to thy glory.’ If any of you plead thus, what store of arguments hath Christ to silence you ! He will then convince you that his title to you was not questionable. He will prove that thou wast his by thy very being, and fetch unanswerable arguments from every part and faculty : he will prove it from his incarnation, his life of humiliation, his bloody sweat, his crown of thorns, his cross, his grave. He that had wounds to show after his resurrection, for the convincing of a doubting disciple, will have such scars to show then as shall suffice to convince a self-excusing rebel. All these shall witness that he was thy rightful Lord. He will prove it also from the discoveries of his word, from the warnings of his ministers, from the mercies which thou receivedst from him, that thou wast not ignorant of his right, and of thy duty ; or at least not ignorant for want of means. He will prove it from

thy baptismal covenant and renewed engagements. The congregation can witness that you did promise to be his, and seal to it by the reception of both his sacraments. And as he will easily prove his right, so will he as easily prove that you denied it to him. He will prove it from your works, from the course of your life, from the stream of your thoughts, from your love, your desires, and the rest of the affections of your disclosed hearts.

O, brethren, what a day will that be, when Christ shall come in person, with thousands of his angels, to sit in judgment on the rebellious world, and claim his due, which is now denied him! When plaintiff and defendant, witnesses and jurors, counsellors and justices, judges, and all the princes on earth, shall stand equal before the impartial Judge, expecting to be sentenced to their unchangeable state! Then, if a man should ask you, 'What think you now, Sir, of living to God? Is it better to be devoted to him, or to the flesh? Which now do you take for the better master? What would you do now if it were all to do again? What would you then say to such a question? How would you answer it? Would you make as light of it as now you do?' O, Sirs, you may hear these things now from your poor fellow-creature, as proud-hearted gallants, or as self-conceited deriders, or as besotted worldlings, or senseless blocks, or secret infidels, that as those, Deut. xxix. 19, do bless themselves in their hearts, and say, 'We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our hearts.' But then you will hear them as trembling prisoners. Read the 20th verse at leisure. Such a sight will work when words will not, especially words not believed, nor considered of. When you shall see the God that you disowned, the Redeemer whom you neglected, the glory which you forfeited, by preferring the pleasures of the flesh before it, the saints triumphing whom you refused to imitate, and a doleful eternity of misery to be remedilessly endured, then saints will seem wiser men in your eyes, and how gladly would you then be such? But O, too late! What a thing is it, that men who say they believe such a judgment, and everlasting life and death, as all Christians profess to do, can yet read, and hear, and talk of such things as insensibly as if they were dreams or fables! I know it is the nature of sin to deceive, and of a sinful heart to be too willing of such deceiving, and it is the business of Satan by deceiving to destroy, and with the most specious baits to angle for souls;

and therefore I must expect that those of you that are taken and are the nearest to the pit, should be least fearful of the danger, and most confident to escape, though you are conscious that you live not to God, but to yourselves. But for my part, I have read and considered what God saith in his word, and I have found such evidence of its certain truth, that I heartily wish that I might rather live on a dunghill, and be the scorn of the world, and spend my few days in beggary and calamity, than that I should stand before the Lord, my Judge, in the case of that man, whatever he be, that is not in heart and life devoted unto God, but liveth to his flesh. For I know that if we live after the flesh, we shall die. (Rom. viii. 13.) I had rather lie here in Lazarus's poverty, and want the compassion and relief of man, than to be clothed with the best, and fare deliciously, and hereafter be denied a drop of water to cool the flames of the wrath of God.

I confess this is likely to seem but harsh and ungrateful preaching to many of you. Some pleasant jingles, or witty sayings, or shreds of reading, and pretty cadency of neat expressions, were likelier to be accepted, and procure applause with them who had rather have their ears and fantasy tickled than rubbed so roughly, and be roused from their ease and pleasing dreams. But shall I preach for myself, while I pretend to be preaching you from yourselves to God? Shall I seek myself, while I am preaching of the everlasting misery of self-seekers? God forbid. Sirs, I know the terrors of the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 11,) I believe, and therefore speak. Were I a Christian no deeper than the throat, I would fish for myself, and study more to please you than to save you. I love not to make a needless stir in men's consciences, nor to trouble their peace by a doctrine which I do not believe myself. But I believe that our Judge is even at the door, and that we shall shortly see him coming in his glory, and the host of heaven attending him with acclamations. In the mean time, your particular doom draws on; the fashion of all these things passeth away, as those seats will anon be empty when you are departed, so it is but a moment till all your habitations shall change their possessors, and the places of your abode, and too great delight, shall know you no more. I must needs speak to you as to transient, itinerant mortals, who must, ere long, be carried on men's shoulders to the dust, and there be left by those that must shortly follow you; then farewell honours and fleshly

delights; farewell all the accommodations and contents of this world. O that you had sooner bid them farewell! Had you lived to Christ as you did to them, he would not so have turned you off, nor have left your dislodged souls to utter desolation.

In a word, as sure as the word of God is true, if you own him not now as your Lord and Sovereign, he will not own you then as his chosen to salvation. And if now you live not to him, you shall not then live with him. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Gal. v. 7, 8.) "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he should tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." (Psalm l. 22.)

Beloved hearers, believe as you pretend to believe, and then live as you do believe. If you believe that you are not your own, but his that made you, and bought you with a price, and that he will thus try you for your lives and everlasting comforts on this question, whether you have lived to him, or to yourselves? Then live as men that do indeed believe it. Let your religion be visible, as well as audible, and let those that see your lives, and observe the scope of your endeavours, see that you believe it. But if you believe not these things, but are infidels in your hearts, and think you shall feel neither pain nor pleasure when this life is ended, but that man dieth as the beast, then I cannot wonder if you live as you believe. He that thinks he shall die like a dog, is like enough to live like a dog, even in his filthiness, and in snarling for the bones of worldly vanities, which the children do contemn.

Having spoken thus much by way of exhortation, I shall add few words for your more particular direction, that you may see to what my exhortation doth tend, and it may not be lost.

1. Be sure that you look to the uprightness of your heart, in this great business of devoting yourselves to God; especially see,

1. That you discern, and soundly believe that excellency in God which is not in the creature, and that perfect felicity in his love, and in the promised glory, which will easily pay for all your losses.

2. And that upon a deliberate comparing him with the pleasures of this world, you do resolutely renounce them, and dedicate yourselves to him.

3. And especially that you search carefully lest any reserve should lurk in your hearts, and you should not deliver up yourselves to him absolutely, for life and death, for better and worse, but should still retain some hopes of an earthly felicity, and not take the unseen felicity for your portion. "It is the lot of the wicked to have their portion in this life." (Psalm xvii. 14.) And let me here warn you of one delusion, by which many thousands have perished, and cheated themselves out of their everlasting hopes. They think that it is only some grosser disgraceful sins, as swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, injustice, &c., that will prove men's perdition, and because they are not guilty of these, they are secure, when, as it is the predominancy of the interest of the flesh against the interest of God in their hearts and lives, that is the certain evidence of a state of damnation, which way soever it be that this is expressed. Many a civil gentleman hath his heart more addicted to his worldly interest, and less to God, than some whoremongers and drunkards. If you live with good reputation for civility, yea, for extraordinary ingenuity, yea, for religious zeal, and no disgraceful vice is perceived in your lives, yet if your hearts be on these things which you possess, and you love your present enjoyments better than God, and the glory that he hath promised, your case is as dangerous as the publicans and harlots. You may spend your days in better reputation, but you will end them in as certain desolation as they. The question is only whether God have your hearts and lives, and not whether you denied them to him with a plausible civility. Nay, it is merely for their carnal selves to preserve their reputation, that some men do forbear those grosser crimes, when yet God hath as little of them as of the more visible profane. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him." (1 John, ii. 15.)

2. If you are wholly God's, live wholly to him, at least do not stint him, and grudge him your service. It is grown the common conceit of the world, that a life of absolute dedication to God is more ado than needs. 'What needs all this ado,' say they? 'Cannot you be saved with less ado than this?' I will now demand of these men but an answer to these few sober questions.

1. Do you fear giving more to God than his due? Is not all his own? And how can you give him more than all?

2. He is not so backward in giving to you, that owes you

nothing, but gives you plenty, variety, and continuance of all the good you enjoy, and do you think you well requite him !

3. Christ said not of his life and precious blood, it is too much, and will you say of your poor unprofitable service it is too much ?

4. Who will you give that to which you spare from God ? That time, and study, and love, and labour ? To any that hath more right to it, or better deserves it, or will better reward you than he will do ?

5. Are you afraid of being losers by him ? Have you cause for such fears ? Is he unfaithful, or unable to perform his promises ? Will you repent when you come to heaven that you did too much to get it ? Will not that blessedness pay you to the full ?

6. What if you had no wages but your work ? Is it not better to live to God than to man ? Is not purity better than impurity ? If feasting be grievous, it is because you are sick. If the mire be your pleasure, it is because you are swine, and not because the condition is desirable.

7. Will it comfort you more in the reckoning and review to have laid out yourselves for God, or for the world ? Will you then wish that you had done less for heaven, or for earth ? Sirs, these questions are easily answered if you are but willing to consider them.

8. Doth it beseem those to be afraid of giving God too much, that are such bankrupts as we are, and are sure that we shall not give him the twentieth part of his due, if we do the best we can, and when the best, that are scorned by the world for their forwardness, do abhor themselves for their backwardness ! Yea, could we do all, we are but unprofitable servants, and should do but our duty. (Luke xvii. 10.) Alas ! how little cause have we to fear lest we should give God too much of our hearts, or of our lives !

3. If you are not your own, remember that nothing else is your own. What can be more your own than yourselves ?

1. Your parts and abilities of mind or body are not your own ; use them, therefore, for him that owneth them.

2. Your authority and dignities are not your own ; see, therefore, that you make the best of them for him that lent them you.

3. Your children themselves are not your own ; design them for the utmost of his service that trusts you with them, educate them in that way as they may be most serviceable to God. It is the great wickedness of too many of our gentry, that they

prepare their posterity only to live plenteously, and in credit in the world, but not to be serviceable to God or the commonwealth. Design them, all that are capable, to magistracy or ministry, or some useful way of life. And whatever be their employment, endeavour to possess them with the fear of the Lord, that they may devote themselves to him. Think not the preaching of the gospel a work too low for the sons of the noblest person in the land. It would be an excellent furtherance to the work of the gospel if noblemen and gentlemen would addict those sons to the ministry that are fit for it, and can be spared from the magistracy. They might have more respect from their people, and easier rule them, and might better win them with bounty than poor men can do. They need not to contend with them for tithes or maintenance.

4. If you are not your own, your whole families are not your own. Use them, therefore, as families that are dedicated to God.

5. If you are not your own, then your wealth is not your own. Honour God, therefore, with your substance, and with the first fruits of your increase. (Prov. iii. 9.) Do you ask how? Are there no poor people that want the preaching of the gospel for want of means, or other furtherance? Are there no godly scholars that want means to maintain them at the universities, to fit them for this work? Are there no poor neighbours about you that are ignorant, that if you buy them bibles and catechisms, and hire them to learn them, might come to knowledge and to life? Are there no poor children that you might put apprentices to godly masters, where soul and body might both have helps? The poor you have always with you. It is not for want of objects for your charity; if you hide your talents, or consume them on yourselves, the time is coming when it would do you more good to have laid them out to your Master's use, than in pampering your flesh.

Some grudge that God should have the tenths, that is, that they should be consecrated to the maintenance of his service. But little do these consider that all is his, and must all be accounted for. Some question whether now there be such a sin as sacrilege in being, but little do they consider that every sin is a kind of sacrilege. When you dedicated yourself to God, you dedicated all you had, and it was God's before; do not take it from him again. Remember the halving of Ananias, and give God all.

Obj. But must we not provide for our families ?

Answ. Yea, because God requires it, and in so doing, you render it to him. That is given to him which is expended in obedience to him, so be it you still prefer his most eminent interest.

Lastly, if you are not your own, then must not your works be principally for yourselves, but for him that owneth you. As the scope of your lives must be to the honour of your Lord, so be sure that you hourly renew these intentions. When you set your foot out of your doors, ask whether your business you go upon be for God. When you go to your rest, examine yourselves what you have done that day for God, especially let no opportunity overslip you wherein you may do him extraordinary service. You must so perform the very labours of your callings, that they may be ultimately for God; so love your dearest friends and enjoyments, that it be God that is principally loved in them.

More particularly as to the business of the day, what need I say more than in a word to apply this general doctrine to your special works ?

1. If the honourable judges and the justices will remember that they are God's, and not their own, what a rule and stay will it be to them for their work ? What an answer will it afford them against all solicitations from carnal self, or importunate friends ? viz., I am not mine own, nor come I hither to do mine own work, I cannot therefore dispose of myself or it, but must do as he that owns me doth command me. How would this also incite them to promote Christ's interest with their utmost power, and faithfully to own the causes which he owneth !

2. If all counsellors, and solicitors of causes, did truly take themselves for God's, and not their own, they durst not plead for, nor defend a cause they knew which God disowneth. They would remember that what they do against the innocent, or speak against a righteous cause, is done and said against their Lord, from whom they may expect, ere long, to hear, ' In as much as you said or did this against the least of these, you said or did it against me.' God is the great patron of innocence, and the pleader of every righteous cause, and he that will be so bold as to plead against him, had need of a large fee to save him harmless. Say not it is your calling which you must live by, unless you that once listed yourselves in your

baptism under Christ, will now take pay, and make it your profession to fight against him. The emptier your purses are of gain so gotten, the richer you are, or at least the fuller they are, you are so much the poorer. As we that are ministers do find by experience, that it was not without provocation from us that God of late hath let loose so many hands, and pens, and tongues against us, though our calling is more evidently owned by God than any one in the world besides, so I doubt not but you may find, upon due examination, that the late contempt which hath been cast upon your profession, is a reproof of your guilt from God who did permit it. Had lawyers and divines less lived to themselves, and more to God, we might have escaped, if not the scourge of reproachful tongues, yet at least the lashes of conscience. To deal freely with you, gentlemen, it is a matter that they who are strangers to your profession can scarce put any fair construction upon, that the worst cause, for a little money, should find an advocate among you. This driveth the standers by upon this harsh dilemma, to think that either your understandings or your consciences are very bad. If, indeed, you so little know a good cause from a bad, then it must needs tempt men to think you very unskilful in your profession. The seldom and smaller differences of divines, in a more sublime and mysterious profession, is yet a discovery so far of their ignorance, and is imputed to their disgrace. But when almost every cause, even the worst that comes to the bar, shall have some of you for it, and some against it, and in the most palpable cases you are some on one side, and some on the other, the strange difference of your judgments doth seem to betray their weakness. But if you know the causes to be bad which you defend, and to be good which you oppose, it more evidently betrays a deplorable conscience. I speak not of your innocent or excusable mistakes in cases of great difficulty; nor yet of excusing a cause bad in the main from unjust aggravations: but when money will hire you to plead for injustice against your own knowledge, and to use your wits to defraud the righteous, and spoil his cause, or vex him with delays, for the advantage of your own unrighteous client, I would not have your conscience for all your gains, nor your account to make for all the world: it is sad, that any known unrighteous cause should have a professed Christian, in the face of a christian judicature, to defend it, and Satan should plead by the tongues of men so deeply engaged to Christ: but it is

incomparably more sad, that almost every unjust cause should find a patron ; and no contentious, malicious person should be more ready to do wrong, than some lawyers to defend him, or a (dear-bought) fee ! Did you honestly obey God, and speak not a word against your judgment, but leave every unjust man to defend his own cause, what peace would it bring to your consciences ; what honour to your now reproached profession ; what relief to the oppressed ; and what an excellent cure to the troublesome contentions of proud or malicious men.

3. To your juries and witnesses I shall say but this, you also are not your own ; and he that owneth you hath told you, "That he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." It is much into your hands that the law hath committed the cause of the just ; should you betray it by perjury and false witnesses, while there is a conscience in your guilty breast, and a God in heaven, you shall not want a witness of your sin, or a revenger of the oppressed, if the blood of Christ on your sound repentance do not rescue you.

4. If plaintiff and defendant did well consider that they are not their own, they would not be too prone to quarrels, but would lose their right, when God, the chief proprietor, did require it. Why do you not rather take wrong, and suffer yourselves to be defrauded, than do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren ? (1 Cor. vi. 7—9.)

To conclude : I earnestly entreat you all, that have heard me this day, that when you go home, you will betake yourselves to a sober consideration of the claim that God hath laid to you, and the right he hath in you, and all that you have : and resolve, without any further delay, to give him his own ; and give it not to his enemies, and yours. When you see the judgment set, and the prisoners waiting to receive their sentence, remember with what inconceivable glory and terror your Judge will shortly come to demand his due ; and what an inquiry must be made into the tenour of your lives. As you see the eclipsed sun withdraw its light,* so remember how before this dreadful final judgment, the sun and moon, and the whole frame of nature, shall be dissolved ! And how God will withdraw the light of his countenance from those that have neglected him in the day of their visitation. As ever you would be his, then see that you be his now ; own him as your absolute Lord, if you expect he

* This sermon was preached at the time of the eclipse.

should own you then as his people. Wo to you that ever you were born! if you put God then to distraint you for his due, and to take that up in your punishment, which you denied to give him in voluntary obedience. You would all be his in the time of your extremity; then you cry to him as your God for deliverance. Hear him now, if you would then be heard: live to him now, and live with him for ever. A popish priest can persuade multitudes of men and women to renounce the very possession of worldly goods, and the exercise of their outward callings in a mistaken devotedness to God. May not I, then, hope to prevail with you to devote yourselves, with the fruit of your callings and possessions, to his unquestionable service? Will the Lord of mercy but fasten these persuasions upon your hearts, and cause them to prevail, what a happy day will this prove to us! God will have his own, the church will have your utmost help, the souls of those about you will have the fruit of your diligence and good examples, the commonwealth will have the fruit of your fidelity, the poor will have the benefit of your charity, I shall have the desired end of my labour, and yourselves will have the great and everlasting gain.

A
S E R M O N
OF THE
ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST;
AND THE
NECESSITY OF MAN'S SUBJECTION, DEPENDENCE,
AND CHIEFEST LOVE TO HIM.

Preached before the Judges of Assize, at Worcester.

“ But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.”—LUKE xix. 27.

CHRISTIAN READER,

WHEN I had resolved, at the desire of the Honourable Judge of Assize, to publish the foregoing sermon, I remembered that, about six years before, I had preached another on the like occasion, on a subject so like, and to so like a purpose, that I conceived it not unfit to be annexed to the former. I have endeavoured to show you, in both these sermons, that Christ may be preached without Antinomianism; that terror may be preached without unwarrantable preaching the law; that the gospel is not a mere promise, and that the law is not so terrible as it is to the rebellious: as also what that superstructure is, which is built on the foundation of general redemption rightly understood; and how ill we can preach Christ's dominion in his universal propriety and sovereignty, or yet persuade men to sanctification and subjection, without this foundation. I have laboured to fit all, or almost all, for matter and manner, to the capacity of the vulgar. And though, for the matter, it is as necessary to the greatest, yet it is for the vulgar, principally, that I publish it; and had rather it might be numbered with those books which are carried up and down the country from door to door in pedlars' packs, than with those that lie on booksellers' stalls, or are set up in the libraries of learned divines. And to the same use would I design the most of my published labours, should God afford me time and ability, and contentious brethren give me leave.

RICHARD BAXTER.

August 7, 1654.

A
S E R M O N
OF THE
ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST.

PSALM ii. 10, 11, 12.

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, &c.

To waste this precious hour in an invective against injustice and its associates, is none of my purpose ; they are sins so directly against the principles in nature, so well known, I believe, to you all, and so commonly preached against upon these occasions, that upon the penalty of forfeiting the credit of my discretion, I am bound to make choice of a more necessary subject. What? Have we need to spend our time and studies to persuade Christians from bribery, perjury, and oppression ; and from licking up the vomit which pagans have cast out ? And that in an age of blood and desolation, when God is taking the proudest oppressors by the throats, and raising monuments of justice upon the ruins of the unjust. And I would fain believe that no corrupt lawyers do attend your judicatures, and that Jezebel's witnesses dwell not in our country, nor yet a jury that fear not an oath ; I have therefore chosen another subject, which, being of the greatest moment, can never be unseasonable ; even to proclaim him who is constituted the King and Judge of all, to acquaint you with his pleasure, and to demand your subjection.

The chief scope of the Psalm is, to foretel the extent and prevalency of the kingdom of Christ, admonishing his enemies to submit to his government, deriding the vanity of their opposing projects and fury, and forewarning them of their ruin if they come not in.

The verses which I have read are the application of the foregoing prediction, by a serious admonition to the proudest offenders : they contain, 1. The persons admonished, "kings and judges." 2. Their duty : 1. In general to God, "serve him ;" with the adjuncts annexed : 1. Rejoicing. 2. Fear and trembling. 2. More especially their duty to the Son, "kiss him." 3. The motives to this duty. 1. Principally and directly expressed, "lest he be angry," which anger is set forth by the effect, "and ye perish ;" which perishing is aggravated, 1. From the suddenness and unexpectedness, "in the way." 2. From the dreadfulness, "kindled." 1. It is fire, and will kindle and burn. 2. A little of it will produce this sad effect. 3. It will be wo to those that do not escape it ; which wo is set forth by the contrary happiness of those that by submission do escape. 2. The motives subservient and implied are in the monitory words, "be wise, be learned," *q. d.* else you will show and prove yourselves men of ignorance and madness, unlearned and unwise.

Some questions here we should answer for explication of the terms : as,

1. Whether the Lord in verse 11, and the Son in verse 12, be both meant of Christ the Second Person ?

2. Whether the anger here mentioned be the anger of the Father or the Son, "lest he be angry?" I might spend much time here to little purpose, in showing you the different judgment of divines of these, when in the issue there is no great difference, which ever way we take them.

3. What is meant by "kissing the Son?" I answer, according to its threefold object, it hath a threefold duty contained in it.

1. We kiss the feet in token of subjection ; so must we kiss the Son.

2. We kiss the hand in token of dependence ; so must we kiss the hand of Christ ; that is, resign ourselves to him, and expect all our happiness and receivings from him.

3. We kiss the mouth in token of love and friendship ; and so also must we kiss the Son.

4. What is meant by "perishing in the way?" I answer, (omitting the variety of interpretations,) it is their sudden unexpected perishing in the heat of their rage, and in pursuit of their designs against the kingdom of Christ.

I know no other terms of any great difficulty here.

Many observations might be hence raised : as,

1. Serving the Lord is the great work and business that the world hath to do.
2. This service should be accompanied with rejoicing.
3. So should it also with fear and trembling.
4. There is no such opposition between spiritual joy and fear, but that they may and must consist together.
5. Scripture useth familiar expressions concerning man's communion with Christ, such as this, "kiss the Son."
6. There is anger in God, or that which we cannot conceive better of than under the notion of anger.
7. There is a way to kindle this anger; it is man that kindleth it.
8. The way to kindle it chiefly is not kissing the Son.
9. The kindling of it will be the perishing of the sinner.
10. The enemies of Christ shall perish suddenly and unexpectedly.
11. A little of God's anger will utterly undo them.
12. They are blessed men that escape it, and miserable that must feel it.
13. It is therefore notorious folly to neglect Christ, and stand out.
14. Kings, judges, and rulers of the earth, are the first men that Christ summons in, and the chief in the calamity if they stand out.

But I will draw the scope of the text, into this one doctrine; in the handling whereof I shall spend the time allotted me.

Doct. No power or privilege can save that man from the fearful, sudden, consuming wrath of God, that doth not unfeignedly love, depend upon, and subject himself unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

If they be the greatest kings and judges, yet if they do not kiss the mouth, the hand, the feet of Christ, his wrath will be kindled, and they will perish in the way of their rebellion and neglect.

In handling this point I shall observe this order.

1. I will show you what this love, dependence, and subjection are.
2. What wrath it is that will thus kindle and consume them.
3. Why this kissing the Son is the only way to escape it.
4. Why no power or privilege else can procure their escape.

5. The application.

For the first I shall only give you a naked description, wishing that I had time for a fuller explication.

1. Subjection to Christ is, the acknowledging of his absolute sovereignty, both as he is God, Creator, and as Redeemer over all the world, and particularly ourselves; and a hearty consent to this his sovereignty; especially that he be our Lord, and his laws our rule, and a delivering up ourselves to him to be governed accordingly.

2. This dependence on Christ is, when acknowledging the sufficiency of his satisfaction, and his power and willingness to save all that receive him, manifested in his free universal offer in the gospel, we do heartily accept him for our only Saviour, and accordingly, renouncing all other, do wait upon him believingly for the benefits of his sufferings and office, and the performance of his faithful covenant to us, in restoring us to all the blessings which we lost, and advancing us to a far greater everlasting glory.

3. This affection to Christ is, when in the knowledge and sense of his love to us, both common and especial, and of his own excellency, and the blessedness of enjoying him, and the Father and Life by him, our hearts do choose him, and the Father by him as the only happiness, and accordingly love him above all things in the world.

As this threefold description containeth the sum of the gospel, so hath it nothing but what is of necessity to sound Christianity. If any one of these three be not found in thy heart, either have I little skill in divinity, or thou hast no true Christianity, nor canst be saved in that condition.

Object. But do not the Scriptures make believing the condition of the covenant? But here is a great deal more than believing.

Ans. Sometimes faith is taken in a narrower sense, and then it is not made the sole condition of the new covenant; but repentance, and forgiving others, are joined with it as conditions of our forgiveness; and obedience and perseverance, as conditions of our continued justification and salvation. But when faith is made the sole condition of the covenant, then it comprehendeth essentially, (not only supposeth as precedent or concomitant,) if not all three, yet at least the two first of the afore described qualifications; viz., dependence and subjection, which, if it were well understood, would much free the common

sort of Christians from their soul-destroying mistakes, and the body of divinity from a multitude of common errors, and our religion from much of that reproach of solifidianism which is cast upon it by the papists.

2. I must be as brief in opening the second thing, viz. What wrath it is that will thus kindle and consume them. What wrath is in God we need not here trouble ourselves to inquire, but only what is intimated in the threats or curses of the covenants. As there are two covenants, so each hath his proper penalty for its violation.

1. Then till men do come in and submit to Christ they lie under the wrath of God for all their sins, as they are against the covenant of works, or they are liable to the curse of that covenant: Christ's death hath taken away the curse of that covenant; not absolutely from any man, but conditionally, which becomes absolute when the condition is performed. The elect themselves are not by nature under the covenant of grace, but remain under the curse of the first covenant till they come in to Christ.

2. Whosoever rejecteth or neglecteth his grace, and so finally breaketh the new covenant, must also bear the curse or penalty thereof, besides all the former, which is a far greater curse, even as the blessings of this covenant are far greater than those of the first. It was a heavy punishment to be cast out of Paradise, and from the presence and favour of God, and to be cursed by him, and subjected to eternal death, and all creatures below cursed for our sakes, to bear all those curses and plagues threatened in Deut. xxvii. and xxviii., and to have the wrath of God smoke against us, &c., as Deut. xxix. 20. "But of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that doth tread under foot the blood of this covenant, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace?" (Heb. x. 28, 29.) It is true, that for all other sins the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, (or unpersuadeableness,) that is, on them that will not be persuaded to obey the Lord Christ. (Eph. v. 6.) But it is on no other with us, for this is the condemnation, "that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." (John i. 19.)

3. Why is this kissing the Son, that is, loving, depending on, and submitting to him, the only way to escape these curses?

Ans. 1. The most proper and primary reason which can be

given, is, the will of the Great Lawgiver, who, having absolute sovereignty over us, might dispose of us as he please, and make us such laws and conditions as seem best to his wisdom, upon which our justification and salvation should depend : he hath resolved that this shall be the only condition and way ; and that, as no man shall be justified by a mere Christ, or his death abstracted from faith, (that is of age and use of reason,) so this faith shall be the condition upon which they shall be justified : or, as a Christ neglected shall save no man, so the accepting or receiving of him shall justify and save them, as the condition of the covenant performed, under which notion it is that faith justifieth.

2. Yet other improper or subordinate reasons (which receive their life from the former, and without it would be no reasons,) may be given : as, 1. from the equity ; and, 2. from the suitableness and conveniency.

1. It is but equal that he who hath bought us, and that so dearly, and from a state so deplorable and desperate as we were in, should be acknowledged and accepted for our Saviour and our Lord, and that we who are not our own, “ but are bought with a price, should glorify him with our bodies and souls, which are his,” (1 Cor. vi. 20, and vii. 23,) especially when, for that end he both died and rose again, that he might rule, or be Lord over, both quick and dead. (Rom. iv. 9.) If one of you should buy a man from the galleys or gallows, with the price of your whole estate, or the life of your only Son, would you not expect that he should be at your disposal ? That he should love you, depend on you, and be subject to you.

2. And as salvation by free grace through Christ is a way most suitable to God’s honour, and to our own necessitous and low condition, so, in subordination thereto, the way of believing is most rationally conducive to the same ends. As we could not have had a fitter way to the Father than by Christ, so neither could there be a more fit way to Christ, or means to partake of him, than by faith : for though I cannot call it the instrumental cause of our justification, either active or passive, yet is this faith, or acceptance of Christ for our Saviour and King, which is here called “ kissing the Son,” the fairest condition that we could reasonably expect, and the most apparently tending to the honour of our Redeemer ; applying and appropriating to ourselves the person, righteousness, and benefits procured and offered, but not the least of the honour of the work. All we do

is but to accept what Christ hath procured, and that must be by the special assistance of his Spirit too.

4. The fourth thing I promised, is to show you why no other privilege or power in the world can save him that doth not kiss the Son. It may here suffice that I have showed you God's determination to the contrary. But further consider, (if any should hope to escape by their dignities, titles, friends, strength, or any other endowments or virtuous qualifications,) 1. What is their task. 2. What is their power to perform it.

1. They must resist the irresistible will of God. They must do that which heaven or earth, men or devils, were never able yet to do. They have resisted his laws and his love, but they could never resist his purpose or his power. The power that undertaketh to save an enemy, or neglecter of Christ, must first overcome the power of the Almighty, and conquer him that doth command the world. And who hath the strength that is sufficient for this? Sinner, before thou venture thy soul upon such a mad conceit, or think to be saved whether God will or not, try first thy skill and strength in some inferior attempt; bid the sun or moon stand still in the firmament, invert the several seasons of the year, bid the snow and frost to come in summer, and the flowers and fruits to spring in winter; command the streams to turn their course, or the tide its times, or the winds their motion. If these will obey thee, and thy word can prevail with them against the law of their Creator, then mayest thou proceed with the greater confidence and courage, and have some hope to save the neglecters of Christ. Or try first whether thou canst save thy present life against the course of nature and will of God: call back thine age and years that are past; command thy pains and sickness to be gone; chide back this bold approaching death? Will they not obey thee? Canst thou do none of these? How then canst thou expect the saving of thy soul against the determinate will and way of God? Where dwelleth that man, or what was his name, that did neglect Christ, and yet escape damnation? Who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered? (Job ix. 4.) And dost thou think, then, to be first? Thou mayest, perhaps, knock boldly at the gate of heaven, and plead thy greatness, thy virtues, thy alms deeds, and formal devotion, but thou shalt receive a more woful answer than thou dost expect. Jesus we know, and obediencial faith in him we know, but who are ye?

2. He that will save the soul, that loveth not, dependeth not

on, and subjecteth not himself to Christ, must first make false the word of God, and make the true and faithful God a liar? This is another part of his task: "God hath given it under his hand for truth, That "he that believeth not is condemned already; (John iii. 18;) That "he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" (John iii. 36;) that they who are invited to Christ, and make light of it, or make excuses, "shall never taste of his supper;" (Luke xiv. 24; Matt. xxii. 5, 8;) That "it shall be easier for Sodom in the day of judgment, than for that city which refuseth the offers of the gospel;" (Matt. x. 15;) that whosoever would not have Christ to reign over them "shall be brought forth at last and destroyed before him as his enemies;" (Luke xix. 27;) that "they shall all be damned that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 12, &c.) And hath the Almighty said that thus it shall be? Who, then, is he that dare say it shall not be? Is this the concluded decree of heaven? What power or policy is able to reverse it? Hath God said it, and will he not do it?

Thus you see his task that will undertake to save one neglecter of Christ.

2. Let us now consider what power that is which must perform it. If it be done it must be either, 1. By wisdom; or, 2. By strength; whereas, the chiefest of men, even the kings and judges of the earth, are both ignorant and impotent.

1. Ignorant. Though judges are learned in the repute of the world, alas! poor crawling, breathing dust! do you know the secrets of your Maker's counsel? And are you able to overreach them, and frustrate his designs? Doth this book know what is written in it? Can the seat you sit on over-top your counsels? More likely than for you to overtop the Lord. Silly worms! you know not what God is, nor know you any one of his revealed thoughts, no more than that pillar doth know your thoughts. You know not what you are yourselves, nor see any further than the superficies of your skin. What is thy soul; and whence didst thou receive it? Dost thou know its form; or didst thou feel it enter? Which part didst thou feel it first possess? Thou canst call it a spirit, but knowest thou what a spirit is; or rather only what it is not? Thou knowest not that whereby thou knowest: and how was thy body formed in the womb? What was it an hundred years ago? What is that vital heat and moisture? What causeth that order and diversity of its parts? When will the most expert

anatomists and physicians be agreed? Why, there are mysteries in the smallest worm, which thou canst not reach; nor couldst thou resolve the doubts arising about an ant or atom, much less about the sun, or fire, or air, or wind, &c. : and canst thou not know thyself, nor the smallest part of thyself, nor the smallest creature; and yet canst thou over-reach the everlasting counsels.

2. And is thy might and power any greater than thy policy? Why, what are the kings and rulers of the earth but lumps of clay, that can speak and go; moving shadows, the flowers of a day, a corruptible seed, blown up to that swelled consistence in which it appears, as children blow their bubbles of soap, somewhat invisible condensate; which, that it may become visible, is become more gross, and so more vile, and will shortly be almost all turned into invisible again; and that little dust which corruption leaves by the force of fire, may be dissipated yet more, and then where is this specious part of the man? Surely now that body, which is so much esteemed, is but a loathsome lump of corruptible flesh, covered with a smooth skin, and kept a little while from stinking by the presence of the soul, and must shortly be cast out of sight into a grave, as unfit for the sight or smell of the living, and there be consumed with rottenness and worms. These are the kings and rulers of the earth; this is the power that must conquer heaven, and save them that rebel against Christ the Lord. They that cannot live a month without repairing their consuming bodies by food, one part whereof doth turn to their vital blood and spirits, and the other to loathsome insufferable excrements, so near is the kin between their best and worst, judge all you that have common reason, whether he that cannot keep himself alive an hour, and shortly will not be able to stir a finger, to remove the worms that feed upon his heart, be able to resist the strength of Christ, and save the soul, that God hath said and sworn shall not be saved. Ah! poor souls, that have no better saviours. And well may Christ, his truth, and cause, prevail that have no stronger enemies.

Use 1. You have here a text that will fully inform you how you are like to speed at the bar of Christ; who shall die and who shall live. The great assize is near at hand, the feet of our Judge are even at the door. Go thy way, unbelieving sinner, when thou hast had all the pleasure that sin will afford thee, lie down in the dust and sleep awhile, the rousing voice shall

quickly awake thee, and thine eyes shall see that dreadful day. O blessed day ! O doleful day ! Blessed to the saints, doleful to the wicked. O the rejoicing ! O the lamenting that there will be ! The triumphant shoutings of joyful saints ; the hideous roaring cries of the ungodly, when each man hath newly received his doom, and there is nothing but eternal glory and eternal fire. Beloved hearers, every man of you shall shortly there appear, and wait as the trembling prisoner at the bar, to hear what doom must pass upon you. Do you not believe this ? I hope you do believe it. Why what would you give now to know, for certain, how it shall go with you ? Why here is the book by which you must be judged, and here is the sum of it in my text, and the grounds upon which the Judge will then proceed. Will you but go along with me, and answer the questions which hence I shall put to you, and search and judge yourselves by them as you go, you may know what doom you may then expect ; only deal faithfully, and search thoroughly, for self-flattery will not prevent your sorrow.

And here you must know that it is the kiss of the heart, and not of the lips, which we must here inquire after. The question will not be at the great day who hath spoken Christ fair ; or who hath called themselves by the name of Christians ; or who hath said the Creed or the Lord's Prayer oftenest ; or cried Lord, Lord ; or come to church ; or carried a Bible ; or who hath held this opinion, or who that. It would make a man's heart ache to think how zealously men will honour the shadow of Christ, and bow at his name, and reverence the image of the cross which he died on, and the names and relics of the saints that died for him, and yet do utterly neglect the Lord himself, and cannot endure to be governed by him, and resis this Spirit, and scorn his strict and holy ways, and despitefully hate them that most love and obey him, and yet believe themselves to be real Christians. For God's sake, Sirs, do not so delude your immortal souls, as to think your baptism, and your outward devotion, and your good meanings, as you call them, and your righteous dealing with men, will serve the turn to prove you Christians. Alas ! this is but, with Judas, to kiss the mouth of Christ, and indeed to fetch your death from those blessed lips, from whence the saints do fetch their life. I will show you some surer signs than these.

1. And, first, let me a little inquire into your subjection to Christ. Do you remember the time when you were the servants

of sin, and when Satan led you captive at his will, and the prince of darkness ruled in your souls, and all within you was in a carnal peace? Do you remember when the Spirit in the word came powerfully upon your hearts, and bound Satan, and cast him out, and answered all your reasonings, and conquered all your carnal wisdom, and brought you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God? (Acts xxvi. 18.) Or, at least, are you sure that now you live not under the same lord and laws as the ungodly do? Hath Christ now the only sovereignty in your souls; is his word thy law, which thou darest not pass? Doth it bind thy thoughts, and rule thy tongue, and command thyself, and all thou hast? Hast thou laid all down at the feet of Christ, and resigned thyself and all to his will, and devoted all to his disposal and service? If custom bid thee curse and swear, and Christ forbid thee, which dost thou obey? If thy appetite bid thee take thy cups, or fare deliciously every day; if thy company bid thee play the good fellow, or scorn the godly; if thy covetousness bid thee love the world, and Christ forbid thee, which dost thou obey? If Christ bid thee be holy, and walk precisely, and be violent for heaven, and strive to enter in, and the world and the flesh be enemies to all this, and cry it down as tedious folly, which dost thou obey? Dost thou daily and spiritually worship him in private, and in thy family, and teach thy children and servants to fear the Lord? I entreat you, Sirs, deal truly in answering these questions: never man was saved by the bare title of a Christian. If you are not subject to Christ, you are not Christians, no more than a picture or a carcass is a man, and your salvation will be such as your Christianity is. Subjection is an essential part of thy faith, and obedience is its fruit. In short, then, dost thou make him thy fear, and tremble at his word? Dare thou run upon fire or water, sword or cannon, rather than wilfully run upon his displeasure? Wouldest thou rather displease thy dearest friend, the greatest prince, or thine own flesh, than wittingly provoke him? When Christ speaks against thy sweetest sin, thy nature, or custom, or credit, or life, against thy rooted opinions, or thy corrupt traditions, art thou willing to submit to all that he revealeth? Dost thou say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth?" Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do? I am ready to do thy will, O God."

Beloved hearers, this is the frame of every servant of Christ, and this is the acknowledging and accepting him for your Lord.

I beseech you cozen not your souls with shows and formalities. If ever you be saved without this subjection, it must be without Christ's merits or mercy. It must be in a way that Scripture revealeth not, nay, it must be in despite of God, his truth must be falsified, and his power must be mastered, before the disobedient can be saved from his wrath.

2. Examine, also, your dependence on Christ, whether you kiss his hand as well as his feet. Do you understand that you are all by nature condemned men, and liable to the everlasting wrath of God; that Christ hath interposed and paid this debt, and bought us as his own by the satisfaction of that justice; that all things are now delivered into his hands, (John xiii. 3,) and he is made head over all things to his church. (Eph. i. 21, 22.) Dost thou take him for thy only Saviour, and believe the history of his life and passion, the truth of his divine and human nature, his resurrection, his office, and his approaching judgment? Dost thou see that all thy supposed righteousness is but vanity and sin, and that thyself art unable to make the least satisfaction to the law by thy works or sufferings, and if his blood do not wash thee, and his righteousness justify thee, thou must certainly be damned yet, and perish for ever? Dost thou, therefore, cast thyself into his arms, and venture thy everlasting state upon him, and trust him with thy soul, and fetch all thy help and healing from him? When sin is remembered, and thy conscience troubled, and the forethoughts of judgment do amaze thy soul, dost thou then fetch thy comfort from the views of his blood, and the thoughts of the freeness and fulness of his satisfaction, his love, and gospel offers and promises? Dost thou so build upon his promise of a happiness hereafter, that thou canst let go all thy happiness here, and drink of his cup, and be baptised with his baptism, and lose thy life upon his promise that thou shalt save it? Canst thou part with goods and friends, and all that thou hast, in hope of a promised glory which thou never sawest? If thou canst thus drink with him of the brook in the way, thou shalt also with him lift up the head. (Psalm cx. 7.) Dost thou perceive a Mediator as well as a God in all thy mercies, both special and common, and taste his blood in all that thou receivest, and wait upon his hand for thy future supplies? Why, this is kissing the hand of Christ, and depending upon him. O how contrary is the case of the world, whose confidence is like the Samaritan's worship, they trust God and their wits, and

labours, Christ and their supposed merits; I would I might not say Christ and deceit, and wicked contrivances. O blasphemous! joining of heaven and hell to make up one foundation of their trust!

3. Examine a little also your love to Christ. Do you thus kiss the son? Do your souls cleave to him, and embrace him with the strongest of your affections? Sirs, though there is nothing that the blind world is more confident in than this, that they love Christ with all their hearts, yet is there nothing wherein they are more false and faulty. I beseech you, therefore, deal truly in answering here. Are your hearts set upon the Lord Jesus? Do you love him above all things in this world? Do you stick at your answer? Do you not know? Sure, then, at best you love him but little, or else you could not choose but know it. Love is a stirring and sensible affection, you know what it is to love a friend. Feel by this pulse whether you live or die. Doth it beat more strongly toward Christ than to any thing else? Never question man the necessity of this; he hath concluded, 'If thou love anything more than him, thou art not worthy of him, nor canst be his disciple.' Are thy thoughts of Christ thy freest and thy sweetest thoughts? Are thy speeches of him thy sweetest speeches? When thou awakest art thou still with him; and is he next thy heart? When thou walkest abroad, dost thou take him in thy thoughts? Canst thou say, and lie not, that thou wast ever deeply in love with him, that thou dost love him but as heartily as thou dost thy friend, and art as loth to displease him, and as glad of his presence, and as much troubled at his strangeness or absence? Hath thy minister, or godly acquaintance ever heard thee bemoaning thy soul for want of Christ, or inquiring what thou shouldest do to attain him? or thy family heard thee commending his excellency, and labouring to kindle their affections towards him? Why love will not be hid, when it hath its desire, it will be rejoicing, and when it wants it, it will be complaining. Or, at least, can thy conscience witness thy longings, thy groans, thy prayers for a Christ? Wilt thou stand to the testimony of these witnesses? Do you love his weak, his poor, despised members? Do you visit them, clothe them, feed them, to your power? Not only in a common natural compassion to them as they are your neighbours, but do you love or relieve a prophet in the name of a prophet, or a disciple in the name of a disciple. (Matt. x. 40, 42.) Shall all these decide the question?

Beloved hearers, I profess to you all, in the name of our Lord, that it is not your bold and confident affirming that you love Christ, which will serve your turn when Christ shall judge; he will search deep, and judge according to the truth in the inward parts. How many thousands will then perish as his utter enemies, that verily thought themselves his friends? How easily now might they find their mistake if they would but be at the pains to examine themselves? O try, try, Sirs, before God try you, judge yourselves before Christ judge you. It would grieve a man's heart that knows what it is to love Christ, to believe, to be subject to him, to see how rare these are in the world, and yet how confident and careless most men are. It may be that you may think much that I so question your love, yet Christ, that knew all things, questioned Peter's love to him, and that three times, till it grieved Peter. I am a stranger to the most of you, and therefore know not your conditions or inclinations. Yet judge me not censorious if I fear the worst, and if I measure you by the rest of the world, and then I may confidently and sadly conclude that Christ hath few loving subjects among you. If we could hear your oaths and vain speeches turned to heavenly, soul-edifying discourse, and your covetousness to conscionableness, and see that the word of Christ were your law, and that you laid out your endeavours for heaven in good earnest, then we should say, 'These people are the loving subjects of Christ.' But when men are enemies to Christ's doctrine, and ways, and worship, and had rather live after the flesh, and the world, and the traditions of their fathers, and are notorious for profaneness, superstition, and enmity to reformation, who can choose but condole your case? And if your obstinacy will not endure us to help you, yet you shall give us leave, whether you will or no, to lament you.

Use 2. But it is time that I turn my speech to exhortation, and O that you would encourage me with your resolutions to obey! My business here to-day is as his herald and ambassador, to proclaim the Lord Jesus your King and Saviour, and to know whether you will heartily acknowledge and take him so to be or not. And to persuade you to take so fair an offer while you may have it, and to kiss the Son lest his wrath be kindled. This is my business here, in which if I had not some hope to speed, the Lord knows I would not have been here to-day. You will say, 'This is a common errand; do you think we never heard of Christ before?' I confess it is common, blessed be God for it, (and long may it so continue and increase,

and let it be as constant and durable to us as the sun in the firmament : and the Lord grant that England's sins or enemies may never bereave them of the blessing of the gospel, and then it will be a happier land than yet ever was any on the face of the earth,) but is it as common to receive Christ in love and obedience? I would it were. I know the name of Christ is common. The swearer doth swear by it, the beggar begs by it, the charmer puts it into his charms, and the jester into his jests, and every papist and ignorant protestant doth mutter it oft times over in his prayers. But who trembleth at it? Or triumpheth in it? Who maketh it his fear and his joy? And give up their souls and lives to be governed by Christ? I do here solemnly proclaim to you that the Lord Jesus will not be put off with your compliments; he cares not for your mere name of Christianity, nor your cap, nor your knee. If thy heart be not set upon him, thou art none of his. His word must be your law, and you must depend on him alone for soul and body, or never look for mercy at his hands. He is the author of eternal salvation to them only that obey him. (Heb. v. 9.)

What say you then, Sirs, in answer to my message? And what course do you resolve upon? Shall Christ be your love, and your Lord, or not? Will you kiss the Son, or will you slight him still? Methinks you should easily be resolved, and say, 'Away with pleasure, and credit, and worldly gain; away with these bewitching delights and companions; Christ hath bought my heart, and he shall have it; he is my Lord, and I will be ruled by him.' Hearers, I hope God hath kept you alive till now to show you mercy, and brought some sinners hither to-day to prevail with their hearts; and my hope is somewhat strengthened by God's disposal of my own spirit; I was strongly tempted to have preached this sermon in the enticing words of human wisdom, tending to a proud ostentation of parts; but Christ hath assisted me to conquer the temptation, and commanded me to preach him in plainness, and evidence of the Spirit. I come not to persuade you to opinions or factions, to be for this side, or for that, but to be with all your hearts for Christ, as ever you look that Christ should be for you: to love him as he that hath bought you from eternal wrath, and died to save you from everlasting burnings; to lay hold on him with most earnest affectionate apprehension, as a man that is ready to drown would do upon a bough, or upon the hand of his friend that would pull him to the shore; to wait for the law of thy direction from him, and do nothing till thou hast asked counsel

at his word, and know his mind, whether thou shouldest do it or no, till thou feel thy conscience bound by his law, that thou canst not stir till he give thee leave ; that the commands of parents and princes may stoop to his, much more the commands of custom and company, of credit or pleasure, of the world or flesh ; these are the things that I exhort you to ; and I must tell you that Christ doth flatly expect them at your hands.

I will here back these exhortations with some persuading considerations. Think of what I say, and weigh it as we go. If I speak not truth and reason, then reject it with disdain, and spare not ; but if it be, and thy conscience tell thee so, take heed then how thou dost neglect or reject it, lest thou be found a fighter against the Spirit, and lest the curse of God do seize upon that heart that would not yield to truth and reason.

And I will draw these considerations only from my text :

1. Thou art else a rebel against thy sovereign Lord. This I gather from the command in my text : and, indeed, the scope of the whole psalm. God hath given thee into the hands of his son, and made him Lord and King of all, and commanded all men to accept him, and submit unto him. Who can show such title to the sovereignty ? such right to rule thee as Christ can do ? He is thy Maker, and so is not Satan ; he dearly bought thee, and so did not the world ; “Thou wast not redeemed with silver, and gold, and corruptible things.” (1 Peter i. 18.) I make this challenge here in the behalf of Christ ; let any thing in the world step forth and show a better title to thee, to thy heart, and to thy life, than Christ doth show, and let them take thy heart, and take the rule. But why do I speak thus ? I know thou wilt confess it ; and yet wilt thou not yield him thy chiefest love and obedience : out of thy own mouth then art thou condemned, and thou proclaimest thyself a knowing and wilful rebel.

2. To deny thy affections and subjection to Christ is the most barbarous unkindness that a sinner can be guilty of. Did he pity thee in thy lost estate, and take thee up when thou layest wounded in the way, and make thee a plaster of the blood of his heart ? And is this thy requital ? Did he come down from heaven to earth, to seek thee when thou wast lost, and take upon him all thy debt, and put himself into the prison of the world and flesh ? Hath he paid for thy folly, and borne that wrath of God which thou must have suffered for ever ? And doth he not now deserve to be entertained with most affectionate respect ? But with a few cold thoughts instead of hearty

love ; and with a few formal words instead of worship ? What hurt had it been to him if thou hadst perished ? What would he have lost by it if thou hadst lain in hell ? Would not justice have been glorified upon a disobedient wretch ? Might not he have said to his Father, ‘ What are these worms and sinners to me ? must I smart for their folly ? must I suffer when they have sinned ? must I debase myself to become man because they would have exalted themselves to become as God ? If they will needs undo themselves what is it to me ? If they will cast themselves into the flames of hell must I go thither to fetch them out ? ’ Thus Christ might have put off the suffering and the shame, and let it fall and lie where it was due ; but he did not ; his compassion would not suffer him to see us suffer ; justice must be satisfied, the threat must be fulfilled ; Christ seeth that we cannot overcome it, but he can ; therefore, he comes down into flesh, he lives on earth, he fasteth, he weepeth, he is weary, he is tempted, he hath not a place to put his head, he is hated, he is spit upon, he is clothed as a fool, and made a scorn, he sweateth blood, he is crucified with thieves, he bears the burden that would have sunk all us to hell ; and must he after all this be neglected and forgotten, and his laws that should rule us be laid aside, and be accounted too strict and precise for us to live by ? O let the heavens blush, and the earth be ashamed, at this barbarous ingratitude ! How can such a people show their faces at his coming, or look him in the face when he shall judge them for this ! Would you use a friend thus ? No, nor an enemy. Methinks you should rather wonder with yourselves that ever Christ should give you leave to love him, and say, will the Lord endure such a wretch to kiss him ? Will he suffer himself to be embraced by those arms, which have been defiled so oft by the embracements of sin ? Will he so highly honour me as to be his subject and his servant, and to be guided by such a blessed and perfect law ? And doth he require no harder conditions than these for my salvation ; take, then, my heart, Lord, it is thine ; and O that it were better worth thy having, or take it and make it better ; the spear hath opened me a passage to thy heart, let the Spirit open thee a passage into mine ; deservedly may those gates be fuel for hell, that would not open to let in the King of Glory.

3. To deny thy affection and subjection to the Son is the greatest folly and madness in the world. Why doth he require this so earnestly at thy hands ? Is it for thy hurt, or for thy

good? Would he make a prey of thee for his own advantage? Is it not any need that he hath of thee or of thy service, or because thou hast need of him for thy direction and salvation? Would he steal away thy heart, as the world doth, to delude it? Would he draw thee as Satan doth, to serve him, that he may torment thee? If so, it were no wonder that thou art so hardly drawn to him; but thou knowest sure that Christ hath none of these ends.

The truth is this: his dying on the cross is but part of the work that is necessary to thy salvation; this was but the paying of the debt; he must give thee moreover a peculiar interest, and make that to be absolutely thine, which was thine but conditionally; he must take off thy rags, and wash thy sores, and qualify thy soul for thy prepared glory, and bring thee out of the prison of sin and death, and present thee to his Father blameless and undefiled, and estate thee in greater dignity than thou fell from: and all this must he do by drawing thee to himself, and laying himself upon thee as the prophet upon the child, and closing thy heart with his heart, and thy will with his will, and thy thoughts and ways with the rule of his word; and is this against thee, or for thee? Is there any hurt to thee in all this? I dare challenge earth and hell, and all the enemies of Christ in both, to show the least hurt that ever he caused to the soul of a believer, or the least wrong to the soul of any.

And must he then have such a stir to do thee good? Must he so beseech thee to be happy, and follow thee with entreaties? And yet art thou like a stock that neither hears nor feels? Nay, dost thou not murmur and strive against him, as if he were about to do thee a mischief, and would rather cut thy throat than cure thee, and were going to destroy thee, and not to save thee? I appeal to any that hath not renounced his reason, whether this be not notorious brutish unreasonableness; and whether thou be not like a beast, that must be cast or held while you dress his sores, than to a man that should help on his own recovery. Foolish sinner! it is thy sin that hurts thee, and not thy Saviour; why dost thou not rather strive against that? It is the devil that would destroy thee, and thou dost not grudge at thy obedience to him. Be judge thyself, whether this be wise or equal dealing.

Sinner, I beseech thee in the behalf of thy poor soul, if thou have such a mind to renounce thy Saviour, do it not till thou hast found a better master: say as Peter, "Whither shall we go

Lord? thou hast the words of eternal life :” and when thou knowest once where to be better, then go thy way ; part with Christ, and spare not. If thy merry company, or thy honour, or thy wealth, or all the friends and delights in the world, will do that for thee which Christ hath done, and which at last he will do if thou stick to him, then take them for thy gods, and let Christ go. In the mean time let me prevail with thee, as thou art a man of reason, sell not thy Saviour till thou know for what ; sell not thy soul till thou know why ; sell not thy hopes of heaven for nothing. God forbid that thy wilful folly should bring thee to hell, and there thou shouldest lie roaring and crying out for ever, ‘ This is the reward of my neglecting Christ ; he would have led me to glory, and I would not follow him ; I sold heaven for a few merry hours, for a little honour, and ease, and delight, to my flesh : here I lie in torment, because I would not be ruled by Christ, but chose my lusts and pleasures before him.’ Sinner, do not think I speak harshly or uncharitably to call this neglect of Christ thy folly ; as true as thou livest and hearest me this day, except thy timely submission do prevent it, which God grant it may, thou wilt one of these days befool thyself a thousand times more than I now befool thee, and call thyself mad, and a thousand times mad, when thou thinkest how fair thou wast for heaven, and how ready Christ was to have been thy Saviour and thy Lord, and how light thou madest of his offers ; either this will prove true to thy cost, or else am I a false prophet, and a cursed deceiver. Be wise, therefore, be learned, and kiss the Son.

The former considerations were drawn from the aggravations of the sin ; the following are drawn from the aggravations of the punishment, and from the words of the text too.

1 God will be angry if you kiss not the Son. His wrath is as fire, and this neglect of Christ is the way to kindle it. If thou art not a believer thou art condemned already ; but this will bring upon thee double condemnation. Believe it for a truth, all thy sins, as they are against the covenant of works, even the most heinous of them, are not so provoking and destroying as thy slighting of Christ. Oh ! what will the Father say to such an unworthy wretch ! ‘ Must I send my Son from my bosom to suffer for thee ? Must he groan when thou shouldest groan, and bleed when thou shouldest bleed, and die when thou shouldest die ? And canst thou not now be persuaded to embrace him, and obey him ? Must the world be courted whilst

he stands by ? Must he have the naked title of thy Lord and Saviour while thy fleshly pleasures and profits have thy heart ? What wrath can be too great, what hell too hot, for such an ungrateful, unworthy wretch ! Must I prepare thee a portion of the blood of my Son, and wilt thou not be persuaded now to drink it ? Must I be at so much cost to save thee, and wilt thou not obey that thou mayest be saved ? Go seize upon him, justice, let my wrath consume thee, let hell devour thee, let thy own conscience for ever torment thee ; seeing thou hast chosen death, thou shalt have it, and as thou hast rejected heaven, thou shalt never see it, “but my wrath shall abide upon thee for ever.” (John iii. 36.) Wo to thee, sinner, if this be once thy sentence ! Thou wert better have all the world angry with thee, and bound in an oath against thee, as the Jews against Paul, than that one drop of his anger should light upon thee ; thou wert better have heaven and earth to fall upon thee, than one degree of God’s displeasure.

2. As this wrath is of fire, so is it a consuming fire, and causeth the sinner utterly to perish. All this is plain in the text ; not that the being of the soul will cease, such a perishing the sinner would be glad of ; a happy man would he think himself, if he might die as the brutes, and be no more : but such wishes are vain. It is but a glimpse of his own condition, which he shall see in the great combustion of the world ; when he seeth the heaven and earth on fire, he seeth but the picture of his approaching wo ; but alas ! it is he that must feel the devouring fire. The world will be but refined or consumed by its fire ; but there must he burn, and burn for ever, and yet be neither consumed or refined. The earth will not feel the flames that burn it, but his soul and body must feel it with a witness ; little know his friends that are honourably interring his corpse what his miserable soul is seeing and feeling ; here endeth the story of his prosperity and delights, and now begins the tragedy that will never end ; oh ! how his merry days are vanished as a dream, and his jovial life as a tale that is told ; his witty jests, his pleasant sports, his cards and dice, his merry company and wanton dalliance, his cups and queans, yea, his hopes of heaven and confident conceits of escaping this wrath, are all perished with him in the way ; as the wax melteth before the fire, as the chaff is scattered before the wind, as the stubble consumeth before the flames, as the flowers do wither before the scorching sun ; so are all his sinful pleasures withered, consumed, scattered

and melted. And is not the hearty embracing of Christ, and subjection to him, a cheap prevention of all this? Oh! who among you can dwell with the devouring fire! "Who can dwell with the everlasting burnings!" (Isaiah xxxiii. 14.) This God hath said he will surely do if you are able to gainsay and resist him; try your strength, read his challenge, "Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." (Isaiah xxvii. 4.)

3. This perishing will be sudden and unexpected, in the way of their sin and resistance of Christ, in the way of their fleshly delights and hopes; "They shall perish in the way." (1 Thes. v. 3; Matt. xxiv. 30.) As fire doth terribly break out in the night when men are sleeping, and consumeth the fruit of their long labours; so will this fire break forth upon their souls, and how near may it be when you little think on it! A hundred to one but some of us present shall within a few months be in another world, and what world it will be you may easily conceive if you do not embrace and obey the Son. How many have been smitten, with Herod, in the midst of their vain glory? How many, like Ahab, have been wounded in fight, and dunged the earth with their flesh and blood, who left the Lord's people to be fed with bread and water of affliction, in confidence of their own return to peace? How many have been swallowed up like Pharaoh and his host, in their rash and malicious pursuit of the godly? Little thinks many an ignorant, careless soul what a change of his condition he shall shortly find; those thousands of souls that are now in misery did as little think of that doleful state while they were merrily pleasing the flesh on earth, and forgetting Christ and their eternal state, as you do now; they could as contemptuously jeer the preacher as you, and verily believed that all this talk was but words, and wind, and empty threats, and ventured their souls as boldly upon their carnal hopes. Little thought Sodom of the devouring fire when they were furiously assaulting the door of their righteous reprovcr! as little do the raging enemies of godliness among us think of the deplorable state which they are hastening to! They will cry out themselves then, 'Little did I think to see this day, or feel these torments!' Why, thou wouldest not think of it, or else thou mightest; God told thee in Scripture, and ministers in their preaching, but thou wouldest not believe till it was too late.

4. A little of God's wrath will bring down all this upon those

that embrace not and obey not the Son. If his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, &c. As his mercy being the mercy of an infinite God, a little of it will sweeten a world of crosses; so therefore will a little of his wrath consume a world of pleasures; one spark fell among the Bethshemites, and consumed fifty thousand and seventy men, but for looking into the ark, till the people cry out, "Who can stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Sam. vi. 19, 20.) How then will the neglecters of Christ stand before him? Sirs, methinks we should not hear of this as strangers, or unbelievers! There did but one spark fall upon England, and what a combustion hath it cast this kingdom into. How many houses and towns hath it consumed? How many thousands of people hath it empoverished. How many children hath it left fatherless: and how many thousand bodies hath it bereaved of their souls? And though there are as many hearty prayers and tears poured forth to quench it as most kingdoms on earth have had, yet is the fire kindled afresh, and threateneth a more terrible desolation than before, as if it would turn us all to ashes. One spark fell upon Germany, another upon Ireland, and what it hath done there I need not tell you. If a little of this wrath do but seize upon thy body, what cries, and groans, and lamentations doth it raise. If it be on one member, yea, but a tooth, how dost thou roar with intolerable pain, and wouldest not take the world to live for ever in that condition. If it seize upon the conscience, what torments doth it cause, as if the man were already in hell: he thinketh every thing he seeth is against him; he feareth every bit he eateth should be his bane. If he sleep, he dreams of death and judgment; when he awaketh, his conscience and horror awake with him: he is weary of living, and fearful of dying; even the thoughts of heaven are terrible to him, because he thinks it is not for him. Oh! what a pitiful sight it is to see a man under the wrath of God! And are these little sparks so intolerable hot? What then do you think are the everlasting flames? Beloved hearers, if God had not spoke this I durst not have spoke it: the desire of my soul is, that you may never feel it, or else I should never have chosen so unpleasing a subject, but that I hope the foreknowing may help you to prevent it; but let me tell you from God, that as sure as the heaven is over your head, and the earth under your feet, except the Son of God be nearer thy heart, and dearer to thy heart than friends, or goods, or

pleasures, or life, or any thing in this world, this burning wrath will never be prevented. (Matt. x. 37 ; Luke xiv. 46.)

5. When this wrath of God is thoroughly kindled, the world will discern the blessed from the wretched. "Then blessed are they that trust in him." It is the property of the wicked to be wise too late. Those that now they esteem but precise fools, will then be acknowledged blessed men. Bear with their scorns, Christians, in the meantime, they will very shortly wish themselves in your stead, and would give all that ever they were masters of, that they had sought and loved Christ as earnestly as you, and had a little of your oil when they find their lamps are out. (Matt. xxv. 8.)

And now, hearers, what is your resolution ? Perhaps you have been enemies to Christ, under the name of Christians ; will you still be so ? Have you not loathed this busy, diligent serving of him ; and hated them that most carefully seek him, more than the vilest drunkard or blasphemer ? Have not his word, and service, and Sabbaths, been a burden to you ? Have not multitudes ventured their lives against his ordinances and government ? Nay, is it not almost the common voice of the nation in effect : ' Give us our sports, and liberty of sinning ; give us our readers, and singing men, and drunken preachers ; give us our holidays and ceremonies, and the customs of our forefathers ; away with these precise fellows, they are an eye-sore to us ; these precise preachers shall not control us, this precise Scripture shall be no law to us : ' and, consequently, this Christ shall not rule over us ?

How long hath England rebelled against his government ? Mr. Udal told them, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, ' that if they would not set up the discipline of Christ in the church, Christ would set it up himself in a way that would make their hearts to ache.' I think their hearts have ached by this time ; and as they judged him to the gallows for his prediction, so hath Christ executed them by thousands for their rebellion against him ; and yet they are as unwilling of his government as ever. The kings of the earth are afraid lest Christ's government should unking them ; the rulers are jealous lest it will depose them from their dignities ; éven the reformers that have ventured all to set it up, are jealous lest it will encroach upon their power and privileges ; kings are afraid of it, and think themselves but half kings, where Christ doth set up his word and discipline ; parliaments are afraid of it, lest it should usurp their

authority ; lawyers are afraid of it, lest it should take away their gains, and the laws of Christ should over-top the laws of the land ; the people are afraid of it, lest it will compel them to subjection to that law and way which their souls abhor : indeed, if men may be their own judges, then Christ hath no enemies in England at all, we are his friends, and all good Christians. It is precisians and rebels that men hate, and not Christ : it is not the government of Christ that we are afraid of, but the domineering of aspiring, ambitious presbyters, (viz., that generation of godly, learned, humble ministers, who have done more than ever did any before them, to make themselves incapable of preferment or domineering,) and when men disobey and disregard our doctrine, it is not Christ, but the preacher, that they despise and disobey. And if the Jews might so have been their own judges, it was not the Son of God whom they crucified, but an enemy to Cæsar, and a blasphemer that works by the devil. It was not Paul, a saint, that they persecuted, but one that they found to be a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition amongst the people. But were there no seditious persons but apostles and Christians ; nor no troublers of Israel but Elias ; nor no enemies to Cæsar but Christ and his friends ? Oh ! God will shortly take off the veil of hypocrisy from the actions of the world, and make them confess that it was Christ they resisted, and that it was his holy ways and word that did kindle their fury ; else would they as soon have fallen upon the ungodly rabble, as they did upon the most zealous and conscionable Christians : and, however you mangle and deform them with your false accusations and reproach, he will then know and own his people and his cause, and will say to the world, ‘ In despising them you despised me ; and, inasmuch as you did it to one of these little ones, you did it unto me.’ As Dr. Stoughton saith, ‘ If you strike a schismatic, and God find a saint lie a-bleeding, and you to answer it, I would not be in your coat for more than you got by it.’ Hath the world ever gained by resisting Christ ? Doth it make the crown sit faster on the heads of kings ? Or, must they not rather do to Christ as King John to his supposed vicar, resign their crowns to him, and take them from him again as his tributaries, before they can hold them by a certain tenure ? Read over but this psalm, and judge : “ Herod must kill the child Jesus to secure his crown : the Jews must kill him lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation. (John xi. 48.) And did this means secure them ; or,

did it bring upon them the destruction which they thought to avoid?

Or have the people been greater gainers by this than by their kings? What hath England got by resisting his gospel and government, by hating his servants, and by scorning his holy ways? What have you got by it in this city? What say you? Have you yet done with your enmity and resistance? Have you enough; or would you yet have more? If you have not done with Christ, he hath not done with you; you may try again, and follow on as far as Pharaoh if you will, but if you be not losers in the latter end, I have lost my judgment; and if you return in peace, God hath not spoken by me. (1 Kings xxii. 28.)

Sirs, I am loth to leave you till the bargain be made: What say you? Do you heartily consent that Christ shall be your Sovereign, his word your law, his people your companions, his worship your recreation, his merits your refuge, his glory your end, and himself the desire and delight of your souls? The Lord Jesus Christ now waiteth upon you for your resolution and answer; thou wilt very shortly wait upon him for thy doom: as ever thou wouldest then have him speak life to thy soul, do thou now resolve upon the way of life. Remember thou art almost at death and judgment. What wouldest thou resolve if thou knewest that it were to-morrow? If thou didst but see what others do now suffer for neglecting him, that doth now offer thee his grace, what wouldest thou then resolve to do? Sirs, it stirreth my heart to look upon you, (as Xerxes upon his army,) and to think that it is not an hundred years till every soul of you shall be in heaven or in hell! and it may be, not an hundred hours till some of your souls must take their leave of your bodies; when it comes to that, then you will cry, ‘away with the world, away with my pleasures; nothing can comfort me now but Christ;’ why, then, will you not be of the same mind now? When the world cries, ‘away with this holiness, and praying, and talking of heaven! Give us our sports, and our profits, and the customs of our forefathers,’ that is, “away with Christ, and give us Barabbas,” then do ye cry, ‘away with all these, and give us Christ.

Oh! if it might stand with the will of God that I might choose what effect this sermon should have upon your hearts; verily, it should be nothing that should hurt you in the least; but this it should be, it should now be to fasten upon your souls,

and pierce into your consciences, as an arrow that is drawn out of the quiver of God ; it should follow thee home to thy house, and bring thee down on thy knees in secret, and make thee there lament thy case, and cry out in the bitterness of thy spirit, ‘ Lord, I am the sinner that have neglected thee ; I have tasted more sweetness in the world than in thy blood, and taken more pleasure in my earthly labours and delights than I have done in praying to thee, or meditating on thee ; I have complimented with thee by a cold profession, but my heart was never set upon thee.’ And here should it make thee lie in tears and prayers, and follow Christ with thy cries and complaints, till he should take thee up from the dust, and assure thee of his pardon, and change thy heart, and close it with his own. If thou wert the dearest friend that I have in the world, this is the success that I would wish this sermon with thy soul, that it might be as a voice still sounding in thine ears, that when thou art next in thy sinful company or delight, thou mightest, as it were, hear this voice in thy conscience, ‘ Is this thine obedience to him that bought thee ? ’ That when thou art next forgetting Christ, and neglecting his worship in secret, or in thy family, or public, thou mightest see this sentence, as it were, written upon thy wall, “ Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and thou perish.” That thou mightest see it, as it were, written upon the tester of thy bed, as often as thou liest down in an unregenerate state ; and that it may keep thine eyes waking, and thy soul disquieted, and give thee no rest, till thou hadst rest in Christ. In a word ; if it were but as much in my hands as it is in yours, what should become of this sermon, I hope it would be the best sermon to thee that ever thou heardest : it should lay thee at the feet of Christ, and leave thee in his arms. Oh ! that I did but know what arguments would persuade you, and what words would work thy heart hereto ! If I were sure it would prevail, I would come down from the pulpit, and go from man to man, upon my knees, with this request and advice in my text : Oh ! “ kiss the Son, lest he be angry ; and you perish.”

But if thy hardened heart make light of all, and thou go on still in thy careless neglect of Christ, and yet wilt not believe but thou art his friend and servant, I do here from the word, and in the name of Christ, pass this sentence upon thy soul : Thou shalt go hence, and perhaps linger out in thy security a few days more, and then be called by death to judgment, where

thou shalt be doomed to this everlasting fiery wrath. Make as light of it as thou wilt, feel it thou shalt, put it off and escape if thou canst; and when thou hast done, go boast that thou hast conquered Christ. In the meantime I require this congregation to bear witness that thou hadst warning.

This to all in general: my text yet directeth me to speak more particularly to the rulers and judges of the earth.

Honourable and reverend judges, worshipful magistrates, if you were all kings and emperors, all is one to Christ, you were but high and mighty dust and ashes; Christ sendeth his summons first to you, he knows the leaders' interest in the vulgar; you are the commanders in the host of God, and must do him more service than the common soldiers: if one of you should neglect him, and stand out against him, he will begin with you in the sight of the rest, and make your greatness a stepping-stone to the honour of his justice, that the lowest may understand what they have to do when they see the greatest cannot save themselves.

Shall I say you are wiser than the people, and therefore that this admonition is needless to you? No, then I should accuse the Spirit in my text: the cedars of the earth have always hardly stooped to Christ, which hath made so many of them rooted up. Your honours are an impediment to that self-abasing which he expecteth: your dignities will more tend to blind you than to illuminate. There are few of any sort, but fewest of the great, and wise, and mighty, that are called: yet a man would think that among those that have held out, in these trying times, there should be no need of these suspicions: but hath there not been always a succession of sinners, even of those that have beheld the ruin of their predecessors? Who would have thought that a generation that had seen the wonders in Egypt, and had passed through the sea, and been maintained in a wilderness with constant miracles, should yet be so vile idolaters, or murmuring unbelievers, that only two of them should enter into rest? The best of saints have need of self-suspicion and vigilancy. My advice to you, therefore, is this, learn wisdom by the examples that your eyes have seen: "Them that honour God, he will honour; and they that despise him, shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

More particularly, let me advise you as your duty to the

Son, 1. That you take your commission and office as from him. I think it a doctrine more common than true, that ministers only are under Christ the Mediator, and magistrates are only under God as Creator. Christ is now Lord of all, and you are his servants, as there is no power but from God, so none from God but by Christ. Look upon yourselves as his vicegerents, therefore do not that which beseemeth not a vicegerent of Christ. Remember that as you see to the execution of the laws of the land, so will Christ see that his laws be obeyed by you, or executed on you. Remember when you sit and judge offenders, that you represent him that will judge you and all the world. And O how lively a resemblance have you to raise your apprehension! Think with yourselves, 'Thus shall men tremble before his bar; thus shall they wait to hear their doom;' and be sure that your judgment be such as may most lively represent the judgment of Christ, that the just may depart from your bar with joy, and the unjust with sadness. Let your justice be most severe where Christ is most severe, and so far as you can exercise your clemency, let it be about those offences which our laws are more rigorous against than the laws of God. Be sure yet that you understand the extent of your commission, that you are not the sole officers of Jesus Christ, you are under him as he is head over all; ministers are under him as he is head to his church. (Eph. i. 22.) Ministers are as truly the magistrates' teachers, as magistrates are their governors, yea, by as high and undoubted authority must they oversee, govern, and command ministerially, as their Lord's ambassadors, both kings and parliaments to do whatsoever is written in this bible, as you may command them to obey the laws of the land; yea, and as strict a bond lieth on you to obey them so far as they speak according to this word, and keep within the bounds of their calling, as doth on them to obey you in yours. (Heb. xiii. 7, 17.) Deal not with them so dissemblingly as to call them your pastors, teachers, overseers, and rulers, (as Scripture bids you,) and yet to learn of them but what you list, or to deny them leave to teach or advise you, further than they receive particular warrant and direction from yourselves. Should our assembly limit all their ministerial advice to the warrant and direction of parliament, and not extend it to the warrant and directions of Christ, would they not become the servants and pleasers of men? If you do not your best to set up all the

government of Christ, even that in and proper to his church, as well as that which is over them, and for them, men may well think it is your own seats, and not Christ's that you would advance. I would all the magistrates in England did well consider that Christ hath been teaching them this seven years, that their own peace or honours shall not be set up before his gospel and government; and that they do but tire themselves in vain in such attempts; then they would learn to read my text with the vulgar, *apprehendite disciplinam*. And if the decisive power of the ministry be doubtful, yet at least they would set up their nunciative in its vigour. Christ will rule England either as subjects or as rebels, and all that kings and states do gain by opposing his rule, will not add one cubit to the stature of their greatness. Yet do I not understand by the government of Christ, a rigid conformity to the model of this or that party, or faction, with a violent extirpation of every dissenter. It is the ignorant part of divines, (alas! such there are,) who, with the simple fellow in Erasmus, do expound Paul's *hæreticum hominem devita*, i. e. *de vita tolle*. It is the essentials, and not the accidentals of discipline that I speak of: and if some disengaged standers-by be not mistaken who have the advantage by standing out of the dust of contention, each party hath some of these essentials, and the worst is nearer the truth than his adversary is aware of: and were not the crowd and noise so great that there is no hope of being heard, one would think it should be possible to reconcile them all. However, shall the work be undone while each party striveth to have the doing of it? I was afraid when I read the beginning and end of this controversy in France. The learned Ramus pleadeth for popular church government in the synods; they rejected it as an unwarrantable novelty; the contention grew sharp, till the Parisian massacre silenced the difference. And must our differences have so sharp a cure? Will nothing unite disjoined Christians but their own blood? God forbid. But in the mean time, while we quarrel, the work standeth still. Some would have all the workers of iniquity now taken out of the kingdom of Christ, forgetting that the angels must take them out at last. (Matt. xiii.) Some ministers think as Myconius did, when he was called to the ministry, by a vision leading him into a corn-field, and bidding him reap, he thought he must put in his sickle at the bottom, till he was told '*domino meo non opus est*

stramine, modo aristæ in horrea colligantur. ‘My master needeth not straw; gather but the ears, and it shall suffice.’

Once more: I know I speak not to the parliament that should remedy it, but yet that you may be helpful in your places to advance this work of Christ, let me tell you what is the thing in England that cries for reformation next our sins, even the fewness of overseers in great congregations, which maketh the greatest part of pastoral work to lie undone, and none to watch over the people in private, because they are scarce sufficient for the public work. It is pity that Musculus, that may be head of a society of students if he will continue a papist, must weave and dig for his living if he will be a protestant. It is pity that even Luther’s wife and children must wander destitute of maintenance when he is dead, when Æsop, the stage-player, can leave his son one hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and Roscius have thirty pounds a-day for the same trade; and Aristotle be allowed eight hundred talents to further his search into the secrets of nature. But am I pleading that ministers may have more maintenance? No, be it just or unjust, it is none of my errand. But O that the church had more ministers, which, though at the present they cannot have for want of men, yet hereafter they might have if it were not for want of maintenance. Alas! then, what pity is it that every reformation should diminish the churches’ patrimony. If the men have offended, or if the office of bishops or deans be unwarrantable, yet what have the revenues done? Is it not pity that one troop of an hundred men shall have seven commanding officers allowed them, besides others, and ten thousand, or forty thousand, shall have but one or two overseers allowed them for their souls, when the ministerial work is more laborious, and of greater concernment than the work of those commanders? I tell you again, the great thing that cries for reformation in England, next to sin, is the paucity of ministers in great congregations. I tell you this, that you may know which way to improve your several interests for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in England.

To you, lawyers and jurors, my advice is this, “Kiss the Son.” Remember the judgment is Christ’s, every cause of truth and innocency doth he own, and will call it his cause. Wo, therefore, to him that shall oppose it! Remember every time you take a fee to plead against a cause that you know to be

just, you take a fee against a cause of Christ. Will you be of counsel against him that is your Counsellor and King? Dare you plead against him that you expect should plead for you? or desire judgment, as the Jews, against your Lord and Judge? Hath he not told you that he will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of these little ones, ye did it unto me?" Remember, therefore, when a fee is offered you against the innocent, that it is a fee against Christ; and Judas's gain will be loss in the end, and will be too hot to hold long; you will be glad to bring it back, and glad if you could be well short of it, and cry, 'I have sinned in betraying the cause of the innocent.' Say not it is our calling that we must live upon. If any man of you dare upon such grounds plead a cause against his conscience, if his conscience do not plead it again more sharply against him, say I am a false prophet. If any, therefore, shall say of you, as the Cardinals of Luther, '*Cur homini os non obstruitis auro, et argento,*' let the same answer serve turn, '*Hem pecuniam, non curat,* &c. If any honourable or worshipful friend must be pleased, inquire first whether he be a better friend than Christ. Tell him the cause is Christ's, and you cannot befriend him, except he procure you a dispensation from him. When Pompey saw his soldiers ready to fly, he lay down in the passage, and told them they should tread upon him then; which stopped their flight. So suppose every time you are drawn in to oppose a just cause, that you saw Christ saying, 'Thou must trample upon me, if thou do this.' As Luther to Melancthon, '*Ne causa fidei sit sine fide,*' so say I to you all, '*Ne causa justitiæ sit sine justitiâ.*' When you begin to be cold in a good cause, suppose you saw Christ showing you his scars, as the soldier did to Cæsar when he desired him to plead his cause, 'See here, I have done more than plead for you.' We have had those that have had a tongue for a fee or a friend, but none for Christ; but God hath now, therefore, shut their mouths, and we may say of them, as Granius by his bad lawyer, when he heard him grown hoarse, 'If they had not lost their voices, we had lost our cause.' To conclude, remember, all of you, that there is an appeal from these earthly judgments; these causes must all be heard again, your witnesses re-examined, your oaths, pleadings, and sentences reviewed, and then, as Lampridius saith of Alexander Severus, that he would vomit choler if he saw a corrupt judge, so will Christ

vomit wrath, and vomit you out in wrath from his presence, if corrupt. Therefore, "kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish," &c. I am sensible how I have encroached on your great affairs. Melancthon was wont to tell of a priest that begun his sermon thus, '*Scio quod vos non libenter auditis, et ego non libenter concionor, non diu igitur vos teneam.*' But I may say contrary. I am persuaded that you hear with a good will, and I am certain that I preach willingly, and therefore I was bold to hold you the longer.

A
SERMON OF JUDGMENT

PREACHED AT PAUL'S,

BEFORE

THE HON. LORD MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
OF THE CITY OF LONDON,

Dec. 17th, 1654.

AND NOW ENLARGED.

“ Every one of you shall give account of himself to God.”—ROM. xiv. 12.

“ The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”—JOHN v. 28, 29.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. CHRISTOPHER PACK,
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON;
WITH THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL ALDERMEN.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

BEING desired to preach before you at Paul's, I was fain to preach a sermon which I had preached once before to a poor ignorant congregation in the country, having little leisure for study in London. I was glad to see that the more curious stomachs of the citizens did not nauseate our plain country doctrine, which I seemed to discern in the diligent attention of the greatest congregation that ever I saw met for such a work. But I little expected that you should have so far esteemed that discourse, as to have thought it meet for the view of the world, as I understood by a message from you, desiring it may be printed. I readily obey your will, when it gives me the least intimation of the will of God. It is possible some others may afford it the like favourable acceptance and entertainment. I am sure the subject is as necessary as common, and the plainness makes it the fitter for the ignorant, who are the far greater number, and have the greatest need. I have added the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth heads, or common places, which I did not deliver to you for want of time, and because the rest are too briefly touched (as contrived for an hour's work). I have enlarged these, though making them somewhat unsuitable to the rest, yet suitable to the use of those they are now intended for: the directions also in the end are added.

Blessed be the Father of Lights! who hath set up so many burning and shining lights in your city, and hath watered you so plenteously with the rivers of his sanctuary, that you have frequent opportunities for the refreshment of your souls, to the joy of your friends, the grief of your enemies, and the glory of

that Providence which hath hitherto maintained them, in despite of persecution, heresies, and hell ! It was not always so in London : it is not so in other places, or famous cities in the world ; nor are you sure that it will be always so with you. It doth me good to remember what blessed lights have shined among you, that now are more gloriously shining in a higher sphere—Preston, Sibbes, Stoughton, Taylor, Stock, Randal, Gouge, Gataker, with multitudes more that now are with Christ. It did me good to read in the preface to Mr. Gataker's funeral sermon, by one of your reverend and faithful guides, what a number of sound and unanimous labourers are yet close at work in that part of Christ's vineyard : and it did me good in that short experience and observation, while I was there, to hear and see so much of their prudence, unity, and fidelity.

Believe it : it is the gospel of Christ that is your glory ; and if London be more honourable than other great and famous cities of the earth, it is the light of God's face, and the plenty and power of his ordinances and Spirit, that doth advance and honour it. O know, then, the day of your visitation !

Three things I shall take leave to propound to your consideration, which, I am certain, God requireth at your hand. The first is, that you grow in knowledge, humility, heavenliness, and unity, according to the blessed means that you enjoy. In my eyes, it is the greatest shame to a people in the world, and a sign of barbarism or blockishness, when we can hear and read what a famous, learned, powerful minister such a place, or such a place, had, and yet see as much ignorance, ungodliness, unruliness, and sensuality, as if the gospel had scarce ever been there. I hope it is not thus with you, but I have found it so in too many places of England. We who never saw the faces of their ministers, but have only read their holy labours, have been ready to think, ' Sure there are few ignorant or ungodly ones in such a congregation ! Sure they are a people rich in grace and eminently qualified above their brethren, who have lived under such teaching as this ! At least, sure there can be none left who have an enmity to the fear of God ! ' But when we have come to the towns where such men spent their lives, and laid out their labours, we have found ignorant, sottish worldlings, unprofitable, or giddy, unstable professors, and some haters of godliness among them. O what a shame is this in the eyes of wise men ! And what a confounding aggravation of their sin before God ! Thrive, therefore, and be fruitful in

the vineyard of the Lord, that it may not repent him that he hath planted and watered you.

The second is this, improve your interest to the utmost, for the continuance of a faithful ministry among you, and when any places are void, do what you can to get a supply of the most able men. Your city is the heart of the nation; you cannot be sick but we shall all feel it. If you be infected with false doctrines, the countries will, ere long, receive the contagion. You have a very great influence on all the land, for good or evil! And do you think the undermining enemies of the church have not a special design upon you in this point, and will not promote it as far as is in their power? Could they but get in popish or dividing teachers among you, they know how many advantages they should gain at once. They would have some to grieve and trouble your faithful guides, and hinder them in the work, and lessen that estimation which, by their unity, they would obtain: and every deceiver will hope to catch some fish that casteth his net among such store. We beseech you, if there be learned, holy, judicious men in England, that can be had for supply of such occasions, let them be yours, that you may be fed with the best, and guided by the wisest, and we may have all recourse to you for advice; and where there are most opposers and seducers, there may be the most powerful, convincing helps at hand. Let us, in the country, have the honest, raw, young preachers, and see that you have the chief fathers and pillars in the church. I speak it not for your sakes alone, but because we have all dependence on you.

The third thing which I humbly crave is, that you will "know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thes. v. 12, 13.) And that you will, instead of grieving or rejecting your guides, "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii. 17.) Encourage your teachers, for their work is great, their spirits are weak, they are but frail men; the enemy is more industrious against them than any men, and their discouragements are very many, and the difficulties which they must encounter are very great. Especially obey, submit, and encourage them in the work of government and exercise of Christ's discipline, and managing

the keys of the kingdom which he hath put into their hands. Do you not perceive what a strait your teachers are in. The Lord Jesus requireth them to exercise his discipline faithfully and impartially. He giveth them not empty titles of rule, but lays upon them the burden of ruling. It is his work more than their honour that he intends; and if they will have the honour, it must be by the work. The work is, as to teach the ignorant, and convince the unbelieving and gainsaying, so to admonish the disorderly and scandalous, and to reject and cast out of the communion of the church the obstinate and impenitent, and to set by the leprous that they infect not the rest, and to separate thus the precious from the vile by Christ's discipline, that dividing separation and soul-destroying transgressions may be prevented or cured. This work Christ hath charged upon them, and will have it done whoever is against it. If they obey him, and do it, what a tumult, what clamours and discontents will they raise! How many will be ready to rise up against them with hatred and scorn! Though it be the undoubted work of Christ, which, even under persecution, was performed by the church guides. When they do but keep a scandalous, untractable sinner from the communion of the church in the Lord's supper, what repinings doth it raise! But, alas! this is a small part of the discipline. If all the apparently obstinate and impenitent were cast out, what a stir would they make; and if Christ be not obeyed, what a stir will conscience make: and it is not only between Christ and men, but between men and men that your guides are put upon straits. The separatists reproach them for suffering the impenitent to continue members of their churches, and make it the pretence of their separation from them, having little to say of any moment against the authorised way of government, but only against our slackness in the execution; and if we should set to the close exercise of it, as is meet, how would city and country ring of it; and what indignation should we raise in the multitude against us. O what need have your guides of your encouragement and best assistance in this strait! God hath set them on a work so ungrateful and displeasing to flesh and blood that they cannot be faithful in it, but twenty to one they will draw a world of hatred upon themselves, if not men's fists about their ears. Festered sores will not be lanced and searched with ease. Corrupted members are unwilling to be cut off and cast aside, especially if any of the great ones fall under the censure, who are big in

the eyes of the world, and in their own ; and yet our sovereign Lord must be obeyed, and his house must be swept, and the filth cast out, by what names or titles soever it be dignified with men. He must be pleased, if all be displeased by it. Withdraw not your help, then, from this needful work. It is by the word, Spirit, and ministry, that Christ, the King of his church, doth govern it ; not separately, but jointly by all three. To disobey these is to disobey Christ ; and subjection to Christ is essential to our Christianity. This, well thought on, might do much to recover the unruly that are recoverable. You may conjecture by the strange opposition that church government meets with from all sorts of carnal and corrupted minds, that there is somewhat in it that is eminently of God. I shall say no more but this, that it is an able, judicious, godly, faithful ministry ; not barely heard and applauded, but humbly and piously submitted to, and obeyed in the Lord, that must be your truest present glory, and the means of your everlasting peace and joy.

So testifieth from the Lord your servant in the faith of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

TO THE

IGNORANT OR CARELESS READER.

SEEING the Providence of God hath commanded forth this plain discourse, I shall hope, upon experience of his dealing in the like cases with me, that he hath some work for it to do in the world. Who knows but it was intended for the saving of thy soul, by opening thine eyes, and awaking thee from thy sin, who art now in reading of it! Be it known to thee, it is the certain truth of God, and of high concernment to thy soul, that it treateth of, and therefore requireth thy most sober consideration. Thou hast in it, (how weakly soever it is managed by me,) an advantage put into thy hand from God, to help thee in the greatest work in the world, even to prepare for the great approaching judgment. In the name of God, I require thee, cast not away this advantage; turn not away thine ears or heart from this warning that is sent to thee from the living God! Seeing all the world cannot keep thee from judgment, nor save thee in judgment, let not all the world be able to keep thee from a speedy and serious preparation for it. Do it presently, lest God come before thou art ready! Do it seriously, lest the tempter overreach thee, and thou shouldest be found among the foolish self-deceivers when it is too late to do it better. I entreat this of thee on the behalf of thy soul, and as thou tenderest thy everlasting peace with God, that thou wouldest afford these matters thy deepest consideration. Think on them, whether they are not true and weighty: think on them lying down and rising up: and, seeing this small book is fallen into thy hands, all that I would beg of thee concerning it is, that thou wouldest bestow now and then an hour to read it, and read it to thy family or friends, as well as to thyself; and as you go, consider what you read, and pray the Lord to help it to thy heart, and

to assist thee in the practice, that it may not rise up in judgment against thee. If thou hast not leisure on the other, take now and then an hour on the Lord's days, or at night, to that purpose : and if any passage, through brevity, especially near the beginning, seem dark to thee, read it again and again, and ask the help of an instructor, that thou mayest understand it. May it but help thee out of the snares of sin, and promote the saving of thy immortal soul, and thy comfortable appearance at the great day of Christ, I have the thing which I intended and desired. The Lord open thy heart, and accompany his truth with the blessing of his Spirit ! Amen.

A

SERMON OF JUDGMENT,

&c. &c.

2 COR. v. 10, 11.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.

It is not unlikely that some of those wits that are taken more with things new than with things necessary, will marvel that I chose so common a subject, and tell me that they all know this already; but I do it purposely upon these following considerations. 1. Because I well know, that it is these common truths that are the great and necessary things which men's everlasting happiness or misery doth most depend upon. You may be ignorant of many controversies and inferior points, without the danger of your souls, but so you cannot be of these fundamentals. 2. Because it is apparent by the lives of men that few know these common truths savingly, that think they know them. 3. Because there are several degrees of knowing the same truths, and the best are imperfect in degree, the principal growth in knowledge, that we should look after, is, not to know more matters than we knew before, but to know that better, and with a clearer light and firmer apprehension, which we darkly and slightly knew before. You may more safely be without any knowledge at all of many lower truths, than without some further degree of the knowledge of those which you already know. 4. Besides, it is known, by sad experience, that many perish who know the truth, for want of the consideration of it,

and making use of what they know, and so their knowledge doth but condemn them. We have as much need, therefore, to teach and help you to get these truths, which you know, into your hearts and lives, as to tell you more. 5. And, indeed, it is the impression of these great and master truths, wherein the vitals and essentials of God's image upon the soul of man doth consist: and it is these truths that are the very instruments of the great works that are to be done upon the heart by the Spirit and ourselves. In the right use of these it is that the principal part of the skill and holy wisdom of a Christian doth consist; and in the diligent and constant use of these, lieth the life and trade of Christianity. There is nothing amiss in men's hearts or lives, but it is for want of sound knowing and believing, or well using these fundamentals. 6. And moreover, methinks, in this choice of my subject, I may expect this advantage with the hearers, that I may spare that labour that else would be necessary for the proof of my doctrine; and that I may also have easier access to your hearts, and have a fuller stroke at them, and with less resistance. If I came to tell you of any thing not common, I know not how far I might expect belief from you. You might say 'these things are uncertain to us; or all men are not of this mind.' But when every hearer confesseth the truth of my doctrine, and no man can deny it without denying Christianity itself, I hope I may expect that your hearts should the sooner receive the impression of this doctrine, and the sooner yield to the duties which it directs you to, and the easier let go the sins, which, from so certain a truth, shall be discovered.

The words of my text are the reason which the apostle giveth, both of his persuading other men to the fear of God, and his care to approve to God his own heart and life. They contain the assertion and description of the great judgment, and one use which he makes of it. It assureth us, that judged we must be, and who must be so judged, and by whom, and about what, and on what terms, and to what end.

The meaning of the words, so far as is necessary, I shall give you briefly. "We all," both we apostles that preach the gospel, and you that hear it, "must," willing or unwilling, there is no avoiding it, "appear," stand forth, or make your appearance, and there have your hearts and ways laid open, and appear as well as we, "before the judgment seat of Christ;" that is, before

the Redeemer of the world, to be judged by him as our rightful Lord. "That every one," even of all mankind, which are, were, or shall be, without exception, "may receive," that is, may receive his sentence, adjudging him to his due; and then may receive the execution of the sentence, and may go away from the bar with that reward or punishment that is his due, according to the law by which he is judged. "The things done in his body," that is, the due reward of the works done in his body; or, as some copies read it, "the things proper to the body," that is due to man, even body as well as soul. "According to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad," that is, this is the cause to be tried and judged, whether men have done well or ill, whilst they were in the flesh, and what is due to them according to their deeds. "Knowing, therefore, &c., that is, being certain therefore that these things are so, and that such a terrible judgment of Christ will come, we persuade men to become Christians, and live as such, that they may then speed well, when others shall be destroyed; or, as others, "Knowing the fear of the Lord," that is, the true religion, "we persuade men."

Doct. 1. There will be a judgment. Doct. 2. Christ will be the judge. Doct. 3. All men shall there appear. Doct. 4. Men shall be then judged according to the works that they did in the flesh, whether good or evil. Doct. 5. The end of judgment is, that men may receive their final due by sentence and execution. Doct. 6. The knowledge and consideration of the terrible judgment of God, should move us to persuade, and men to be persuaded, to careful preparation.

The ordinary method for the handling of this subject of judgment should be this. 1. To show you what judgment is in the general, and what it doth contain; and that is, 1. The persons. 2. The cause. 3. The actions. 1. The parties are, 1. The accuser. 2. The defendant. 3. Sometimes assistants. 4. The judge. 2. The cause contains, 1. The accusation. 2. The defence. 3. With the evidence of both. 4. And the merit. The merit of the cause is as it agreeth with the law and equity. 3. The judicial actions are, I. Introductory. 1. Citation. 2. Compulsion, if need be. 3. Appearance of the accused. II. Of the essence of judgment, 1. Debate by, 1. The accuser. 2. Defendant, called the disceptation of the cause. 2. By the judge. 1. Exploration. 2. Sentence. 3. To see to the execution; but

because this method is less suitable to your capacities, and hath something human, I will reduce all to these following heads :—

1. I will show you what judgment is.
2. Who is the judge ; and why.
3. Who must be judged.
4. Who is the accuser.
5. How the citation, constraint, and appearance will be.
6. What is the law by which men shall be judged.
7. What will be the cause of the day ; what the accusation, and what must be the just defence.
8. What will be the evidence.
9. What are those frivolous, insufficient excuses, by which the unrighteous may think to escape.
10. What will be the sentence : who shall die, and who shall live ; and what the reward and punishment is.
11. What are the properties of the sentence.
12. What and by whom the execution will be. In these particular heads we contain the whole doctrine of this judgment, and in this more familiar method shall handle it.

I. For the first, judgment, as taken largely, comprehendeth all the forementioned particulars ; as taken more strictly for the act of the judge, it is the trial of a controverted case. In our case, note these things following.

1. God's judgment is not intended for any discovery to himself of what he knows not already ; he knows already what all men are, and what they have done, and what is their due : but it is to discover to others, and to men themselves, the ground of his sentence, that so his judgment may attain its end : for the glorifying his grace on the righteous, and for the convincing the wicked of their sin and desert, and to show to all the world the righteousness of the judge, and of his sentence and execution. (Rom. iii. 4, 26 ; and Rom. ii. 2.)

2. It is not a controversy, therefore, undecided in the mind of God, that is there to be decided ; but only one that is undecided as to the knowledge and mind of creatures.

3. Yet is not this judgment a bare declaration, but a decision, and so a declaration thereupon : the cause will be then put out of controversy, and all further expectation of decision be at an end ; and with the justified there will be no more accusation, and with the condemned no more for ever.

II. For the second thing, who shall be the judge, I answer, the judge is God himself, by Jesus Christ.

1. Principally, God as Creator.

2. As also, God as Redeemer, the human nature of Jesus Christ having a derived subordinate power. God lost not his right to his creature, either by man's fall, or the redemption by Christ, but by the latter hath a new further right : but it is in and by Christ that God judgeth ; for, as mere Creator of innocent man, God judgeth none, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, who hath procured his right by the redeeming of fallen man. (John v. 22.) But as the Son only doth it in the nearest sense, so the Father, as Creator, doth it remotely and principally.

1. In that the power of the Son is derived from the Father, and so standeth in subordination to him as fountain or efficient.

2. In that the judgment of the Son (as also his whole mediatorialship), is to bring men to God their Maker, as their ultimate end, and to recover them to him from whom they are fallen, and so as a means to that end, the judgment of the Son is subordinate to the Father.

From hence you may see these following truths worthy your consideration.

1. That all men are God's creatures, and none are the workmanship of themselves, or any other ; or else the Creator should not judge them on that right.

2. That Christ died for all, and is the Redeemer of the world, and a sacrifice for all, or else he should not judge them on that right. For he will not judge wicked men as he will do the devils, as the mere enemies of his redeemed ones, but as being themselves his subjects in the world, and being bought by him, and therefore become his own, who ought to have glorified him that bought them. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15 ; 2 Pet. ii. 1 ; 1. Cor. vi. 9, 20 ; 1 John ii. 2 ; Heb. ii. 9 ; 1 Tim. ii. 6, 7.)

3. Hence, it appeareth that all men were under some law of grace, and did partake of some of the Redeemer's mercy. Though the gospel came not to all, yet all had that mercy which could come from no other fountain but his blood, and which should have brought them nearer to Christ than they were, (though it were not sufficient to bring them to believe,) and which should have led them to repentance. (Rom. ii. 4.) For the neglecting of which they justly perish, and not merely for sinning against the law that was given man in innocency : were that so, Christ would not judge them as Redeemer, and that for

the abuse or non-improvement of his talents, as he tells us he will do. (Matt. xxv. *per totum*.)

4. If God will be the judge, then none can expect, by any shifts or indirect means, to escape at that day. For how should it be ?

1. It is not possible that any should keep out of sight, or hide their sin, and the evil of their actions, and so delude the judge. "God will not be mocked now, nor deceived then." (Gal. vi. 7.) They grossly deceive themselves that imagine any such thing. God must be omniscient and all-seeing, or he cannot be God. Should you hide your case from men, and from devils, and be ignorant of it yourselves, yet you cannot hide it from God. Never did there a thought pass thy heart, or a word pass thy mouth, which God was not acquainted with : and as he knows them, so doth he observe them. He is not as imperfect man, taken up with other business, so that he cannot mind all ; as easy it is with him to mind every thought, or word, or action of thine, as if he had but that one in the world to observe, and as easy to observe each particular sinner, as if he had but another creature to look after in the world. He is a fool indeed that thinks now that God takes no notice of him, (Ezek. viii. 12, and ix. 9,) or that thinketh then to escape in the crowd : he that found out one guest that had not on a wedding garment, (Matt. xxii. 12,) will then find out every unholy soul, and give him so sad a salutation as shall make him speechless. "For he knoweth vain man ; he seeth wickedness also, and will he not consider it ?" (Job xi. 11.)

2. It is not possible that any should escape at that day by any tricks of wit ; any false reasoning in their own defence. God knoweth a sound answer from an unsound, and a truth from a lie. Righteousness may be perverted here on earth, by by outwitting the judge ; but so will it not be then : to hope any of this, is to hope that God will not be God. It is in vain, then, for the unholy man to say he is holy ; or a sinner to deny, or excuse, or extenuate his sin : to bring forth the counterfeit of any grace, and plead with God any shells of hypocritical performances, and to think to prove a title to heaven by any thing short of God's condition, all these will be vain attempts.

3. And as impossible will it prove by fraud or flattery, by persuasion or bribery, or by any other means, to pervert justice, by turning the mind of God, who is the judge. Fraud and flattery, bribery and importunity, may do much with weak men ;

but with God, they will do nothing. Were he changeable and partial he were not God.

4. If God be judge, you may see the cavils of infidels are foolish, when they ask, ‘ How long will God be in trying and judging so many persons, and taking an account of so many words, and thoughts, and deeds ? Sure it will be along time, and a difficult work.’ As if God were as man, that knoweth not things, till he seek out their evidence by partial signs. Let these fools understand, if they have any understanding, that the infinite God can show to every man at once all the thoughts, and words, and actions, that ever he hath been guilty of. And in the twinkling of an eye, even at one view, can make all the world to see their ways, and their deservings, causing their consciences and memories to present them all before them, in such a sort, as shall be equivalent to a verbal debate; (Psalm l. 21, 22;) he will set them in order before them.

5. If Jesus Christ be the judge, then what a comfort must it needs be to his members that he shall be judge that loved them to the death, and whom they loved above their lives; and he who was their rock of hope and strength, and the desire and delight of their souls !

6. And if Jesus Christ must be the judge, what confusion will it bring to the faces of his enemies, and of all that set light by him in the day of their visitation, to see mercy turned against them; and he that died for them, now ready to condemn them; and that blood and grace, which did aggravate their sin, to be pleaded against them, to the increase of their misery; how sad will this be !

7. If the God of love, and grace, and truth, be judge, then no man need to fear any wrong. No subtlety of the accuser, nor darkness of evidence; no prejudice or partiality, or whatsoever else may be imagined, can there appear to the wrong of your cause. Get a good cause, and fear nothing: and if your cause be had, nothing can deliver you.

III. For the third point, Who are they that must be judged ?

Answ. All the rational creatures in this lower world, and it seems angels also, either all, or some. But because their case is more darkly made known to us, and less concerns us, we will pass it by. Every man that hath been made or born on earth, except Christ, who is God and man, and is the judge, must be judged. If any foolish infidels shall say, ‘ Where shall so

great a number stand?' I answer him, that he knoweth not the things invisible, either the nature of spirits and spiritual bodies, nor what place containeth them, or how, but easily he may know that he that gave them all a being, can sustain them all, and have room for them all, and can at once disclose the thoughts of all, as I said before.

The first in order to be judged are the saints, (Matt. xxv.,) and then with Christ they shall judge the rest of the world, (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3,) not in an equal authority and commission with Christ, but as the present approvers of his righteous judgment. The princes of the earth shall stand then before Christ, even as the peasants, and the honourable as the base; the rich and the poor shall meet together, and the Lord shall judge them all. (Prov. xxii. 2.) No men shall be excused from standing at that bar, and giving up their account, and receiving their doom. Learned and unlearned, young and old, godly and ungodly, all must stand there. I know some have vainly imagined that the righteous shall not have any of their sins mentioned, but their graces and duties only, but they consider not that things will not then be transacted by words as we do now, but by clear discoveries, by the infinite light; and that if God should not discover to them their sins, he would not discover the riches of his grace in the pardon of all these sins. Even then they must be humbled in themselves, that they may be glorified, and for ever cry, "Not unto us, Lord, but unto thy name, be the glory."

IV. For the fourth particular, Who will be the accuser?

Answ. 1. Satan is called in Scripture the accuser of the brethren, (Rev. xii. 10,) and we find in Job i. and other places, that now he doth practise even before God, and therefore we judge it probable that he will do so then. But we would determine of nothing that Scripture hath not clearly determined.

2. Conscience will be an accuser, though especially of the wicked, yet in some sense, of the righteous, for it will tell the truth to all. And, therefore, so far as men are faulty, it will tell them of their faults. The wicked it will accuse of unpardoned sin, and of sin unrepented of, the godly only of sin repented of, and pardoned. It will be a glass wherein every man may see the face of his heart and former life. (Rom. i. 15.)

3. The Judge himself will be the principal accuser, for it is he that prosecutes the cause, and will do justice on the wicked. God judgeth even the righteous themselves to be sinners, or

else they could not be pardoned sinners. But he judgeth the wicked to be impenitent, unbelieving, unconverted sinners. Remember what I said before, that it is not a verbal accusation but an opening of the truth of the cause to the view of ourselves and others, that God will then perform.

Nor can any think it unworthy of God to be men's accuser by such a disclosure, it being no dishonour to the purest light to reveal a dunghill, or to the greatest prince to accuse a traitor. Nor is it unmeet that God should be both accuser and judge, seeing he is both absolute Lord and perfectly just, and so far beyond all suspicion of injustice. His law, also, doth virtually accuse. (Job v. 45.) But of this by itself.

V. For the fifth particular, how will the sinners be called to the bar?

Answ. God will not stand to send them a citation, nor require him to make his voluntary appearance, but willing or unwilling, he will bring them in.

1. Before each man's particular judgment, he sendeth death to call away his soul, a surly serjeant, that will have no nay. How dear so ever this world may be to men, and how loth so ever they are to depart, away they must, and come before the Lord that made them. Death will not be bribed. Every man that was set in the vineyard in the morning of their lives, must be called out at evening to receive according to what he hath done. Then must the naked soul alone appear before its Judge, and be accountable for all that was done in the body, and be sent before till the final judgment, to remain in happiness or misery, till the body be raised again, and joined to it.

In this appearance of the soul before God, it seemeth by Scripture that there is some ministry of angels, for in Luke xvi. 22, it is said that the angels carried Lazarus, that is, his soul, into Abraham's bosom. What local motion there is, or situation of souls, is no fit matter for the inquiry of mortals. And what it is in this that the angels will do, we cannot clearly understand as yet, but most certain it is, that as soon as ever the soul is out of the body, it comes to its account before the God of spirits.

2. At the end of the world, the bodies of all men shall be raised from the earth, and joined again to their souls, and the soul and body shall be judged to their endless state, and this is the great and general judgment where all men shall at once appear. The same power of God that made men of nothing,

will as easily then re-make them by a resurrection, by which he will add much more perfection even to the wicked in their naturals, which will make them capable of the greater misery; even they shall have immortal and incorruptible bodies, which may be the subjects of immortal wo. (1 Cor. xv. 53; John v. 28, 29.)

Of this resurrection, and our appearance at judgment, the angels will be some way the ministers. As they shall come with Christ to judgment, so they shall sound his trumpet, (1 Thes. iv. 16,) and they shall gather the wicked out of God's kingdom, and they shall gather the tares to burn them. (Matt. xiii. 39—41,) In the end of the world, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. (Matt. xvii. 49, 50.)

VI. For the sixth particular, What law is it that men shall be judged by?

Ans. That which was given them to live by. God's law is but the sign of his will, to teach us what shall be due from us and to us; before we fell, he gave us such a law as was suitable to our perfection; when we had sinned, and turned from him, as we ceased not to be his creatures, nor he to be our Lord, so he destroyed not his law, nor discharged or absolved us from the duty of our obedience. But because we stood condemned by the law, and could be justified by it, having once transgressed it, he was pleased to make a law of grace, even a new, a remedying law, by which we might be saved from the deserved punishment of the old. So we shall be tried at judgment upon both these laws, but ultimately upon the last. The first law commanded perfect obedience, and threatened death to us if ever we disobeyed. The second law, finding us under the guilt of sin against the first, doth command us to repent, and believe in Christ, and so return to God by him, and promiseth us pardon of all our sins upon that condition, and also, if we persevere, everlasting glory. So that in judgment, though it must be first evinced that we are sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of pure nature, yet that is not the upshot of the judgment. For the inquiry will be next, whether they have accepted the remedy, and so obeyed the law of grace, and performed its condition for pardon and salvation, and upon this our life or death will depend. It is both these laws that condemn the wicked, but it is only the law of grace that justifieth the righteous.

Obj. But how shall heathens be judged by the law of grace, that never did receive it?

Answ. The express gospel some of them had not, and therefore shall not directly be judged by it, but much of the Redeemer's mercy they did enjoy, which should have led them to repent, and seek out after recovery from their misery, and to come nearer Christ, and for the neglect and abuse of this they shall be judged, and not merely for sinning against the law that was given us in pure innocency, so that Christ, as Redeemer, shall judge them as well as others. Though they had but one talent, yet must they give an account of that to the Redeemer, from whom they received it. But if any be unsatisfied in this, let them remember, that as God hath left the state of such more dark to us, and the terms on which he will judge them, so doth it much more concern us to look to the terms of our judgment.

Obj. But how shall infants be judged by the gospel that were incapable of it?

Answ. For ought I find in Scripture, they stand or fall with their parents, and on the same terms, but I leave each to their own thoughts.

VII. For the seventh head, what will be the cause of the day to be inquired after? What the accusation? And what the defence?

Answ. This may be gathered from what was last said. The great cause of the day will be to inquire and to determine who shall die, and who shall live; who ought to go to heaven, and who to hell for ever, according to the law by which they must then be judged.

1. As there is a twofold law by which they must be judged, so will there then be a twofold accusation. The first will be that they were sinners, and so having violated the law of God, they deserve everlasting death, according to that law. If no defence could be made, this one accusation would condemn all the world, for it is most certain that all are sinners, and as certain that all sin deserveth death. The only defence against this accusation lieth in this plea, confessing the charge, we must plead that Christ hath satisfied for sins, and upon that consideration, God hath forgiven us, and therefore, being forgiven, we ought not to be punished; to prove this, we must show the pardon under God's hand in the gospel. But because this pardoning act of the gospel doth forgive none but those that repent and believe, and so return to God, and to sincere obedience for the

time to come, therefore the next accusation will be, that we did not perform these conditions of forgiveness, and therefore, being unbelievers, impenitent, and rebels against the Redeemer, we have no right to pardon, but, by the sentence of the gospel, are liable to a greater punishment for the contempt of Christ and grace. This accusation is either true or false; where it is true, God and conscience, who speak the truth, may well be said to be the accusers. Where it is false, it can be only the work of Satan, the malicious adversary, who, as we may see in Job's case, will not stick to bring a false accusation.

If any think that the accuser will not do so vain a work, at least they may see that potentially this is the accusation that lieth against us, and which we must be justified against. For all justification implieth an actual or potential accusation.

He that is truly accused of final impenitency, or unbelief, or rebellion, hath no other defence to make, but must needs be condemned.

He that is falsely accused of such non-performance of the condition of grace, must deny the accusation, and plead his own personal righteousness as against that accusation, and produce that faith, repentance, and sincere obedience and perseverance by which he fulfilled that condition, and so is evangelically righteous in himself, and therefore hath part in the blood of Christ, which is instead of a legal righteousness to him in all things else, as having procured him a pardon of all his sin, and a right to everlasting glory.

And thus we must then be justified by Christ's satisfaction only, against the accusation of being sinners in general, and of deserving God's wrath for the breach of the law of works. But we must be justified by our faith, repentance, and sincere obedience itself, against the accusation of being impenitent unbelievers, and rebels against Christ, and having not performed the condition of the promise, and so having no part in Christ and his benefits.

So that in sum you see, that the cause of the day will be to inquire, whether, being all known sinners, we have accepted of Christ upon his terms, and so have a right in him and his benefits, or not? Whether they have forsaken this vain world for him, and loved him so faithfully that they have manifested it in parting with these things at his command? And this is the meaning of Matt. xxv., where the inquiry is made to be whether they have fed and visited him in his members, or not?

That is, whether they so far loved him as their Redeemer, and God by him, as that they have manifested this to his members according to opportunity, though it cost them the hazard or loss of all, seeing danger, and labour, and cost are fitter to express love by, than empty compliments, and bare professions.

Whether it be particularly inquired after, or only taken for granted, that men are sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of works, and that Christ hath satisfied by his death, is all one as to the matter in hand, seeing God's inquiry is but the discovery and conviction of us. But the last question which must decide the controversy, will be, whether we have performed the condition of the gospel.

I have the rather also said all this, to show you in what sense these words are taken in the text, that "every man shall be judged according to what he hath done in the flesh, whether it be good or bad." Though every man be judged worthy of death for sinning, yet every man shall not be judged to die for it, and no man shall be judged worthy of life for his good works. It is, therefore, according to the gospel, as the rule of judgment, that this is meant. They that have repented and believed, and returned to true, though imperfect obedience, shall be judged to everlasting life, according to these works, not because these works deserve it, but because the free gift in the gospel, through the blood of Christ, doth make these things the condition of our possessing it. They that have lived and died impenitent unbelievers, and rebels against Christ, shall be judged to everlasting punishment, because they have deserved it, both by their sin in general against the law, and by these sins in special against the gospel. This is called the merit of the cause, that is, what is a man's due according to the true meaning of the law, though the due may be by free gift. And thus you see what will be the cause of the day, and the matter to be inquired after and decided, as to our life or death.

VIII. The next point in our method is to show you what shall be the evidence of the cause.

Answ. There is a five-fold evidence among men. 1. When the fact is notorious. 2. The knowledge of an unsuspected competent judge. 3. The party's confession. 4. Witness. 5. Instruments and visible effects of the action. All these evidences will be at hand, and any one of them sufficient for the conviction of the guilty person at that day.

1. As the sins of all men, so the impenitency and rebellion of

the wicked was notorious, or at least will be then: for though some play the hypocrites, and hide the matter from the world and themselves, yet God shall open their hearts and former lives to themselves, and to the view of all the world. He shall set their sins in order before them, so that it shall be utterly in vain to deny or excuse them. If any men will then think to make their cause as good to God as they can now do to us, who are not able to see their hearts, they will be foully mistaken. Now they can say they have as good hearts as the best; then God will bring them out in the light, and show them to themselves, and all the world, whether they were good or bad. Now they will face us down that they do truly repent, and they obey God as they can; but God, who knoweth the deceivers, will then undeceive them. We cannot now make men acquainted with their own unsanctified hearts, nor convince them that have not true faith, repentance, or obedience; but God will convince them of it: they can find shifts and false answers to put off a minister with, but God will not be so shifted off. Let us preach as plainly to them as we can, and do all that ever we are able, to acquaint them with the impenitence and unholiness of their own heart, and the necessity of a new heart and life; yet we cannot do it, but they will believe, whether we will or not, that the old heart will serve the turn. But how easily will God make them know the contrary. We plead with them in the dark; for though we have the candle of the gospel in our hands when we come to show them their corruption, yet they shut their eyes, and are wilfully blind; but God will open their eyes whether they will or not; not by holy illumination, but by forced conviction, and then he will plead with them as in the open light. See here thine own unholy soul; canst thou now say thou didst love me above all? Canst thou deny but thou didst love this world before me, and serve thy flesh and lusts, though I told thee if thou didst so thou shouldest die? Look upon thy own heart now, and see whether it be an holy or an unholy heart; a spiritual or a fleshly heart; a heavenly or an earthly heart. Look now upon all the course of thy life, and see whether thou didst live to me, or to the world and thy flesh. Oh! how easily will God convince men, then, of the very sins of their thoughts, and in their secret closets, when they thought that no witness could have disclosed them. Therefore, it is said that the books shall be opened, and the dead judged out of the books. (Rev. xx. 12; Dan. vii. 10.)

2. The second evidence will be the knowledge of the Judge. If the sinner would not be convinced, yet it is sufficient that the Judge knoweth the cause : God needeth no further witness : he saw thee committing adultery in secret, lying, stealing, forswearing, in secret. If thou dost not know thy own heart to be unholy, it is enough that God knoweth it. If you have the face to say, " Lord, when we did see thee an hungry," &c., (Matt. xxv. 44. ;) yet God will make good the charge against thee, and there needeth no more testimony than his own. Can foolish sinners think to lie hid, or escape at that day, who will now sin wilfully before their Judge ; who know, every day, their Judge is looking on them, while they forget him and give up themselves to the world, and yet go on, even under his eye, as if to his face they dared him to punish them ?

3. The third evidence will be the sinner's confession. God will force their own consciences to witness against them, and their own tongues to confess the accusation. If they do at first excuse it, he will leave them speechless, yea, and condemning themselves before they have done.

Oh ! what a difference between their language now and then. Now we cannot tell them of their sin and misery, but they either tell us of our own faults, or bid us look to ourselves, or deny or excuse their fault, or make light of it : but then their own tongues shall confess them, and cry out of the wilful folly which they committed, and lay a heavier charge upon them than we can now do. Now, if we tell them that we are afraid they are unregenerate, and lest their hearts are not truly set upon God, they will tell us they hope to be saved with such hearts as they have. But then, oh ! how they will confess the folly and falseness of their own hearts. You may see a little of their case even in despairing sinners on earth, how far they are from denying or excusing their sins. Judas cries out, " I sinned in betraying the innocent blood." (Matt. xxiv. 7.) Out of their own mouth shall they be judged. That very tongue that now excuseth their sin, will, in their torments, be their great accuser ; for God will have it so to be.

4. The fourth evidence will be the witness of others. Oh ! how many thousand witnesses might there be produced, were there need to convince the guilty soul at that day !

1. All the ministers of Christ that ever preached to them, or warned them, will be sufficient witnesses against them. We must needs testify that we preached to them the truth of the gospel,

and they would not believe it. We preached to them the goodness of God, yet they set not their hearts upon him. We showed them their sin, and they were not humbled. We told them of the danger of an unregenerate state, and they did not regard us. We acquainted them with the absolute necessity of holiness, but they made light of all. We let them know the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the need of a close and faithful examination, but they would not bestow an hour in such a work, nor scarce once be afraid of being mistaken and miscarrying. We let them know the vanity of this world; and yet they would not forsake it, no, not for Christ, and the hopes of glory. We told them of the everlasting felicity they might attain, but they would not set themselves to seek it.

What we shall think of it then the Lord knows; but surely it seemeth now to us a matter of very sad consideration, that we must be brought in as witnesses against the souls of our neighbours and friends in the flesh. Those whom we now unfeignedly love, and would do any thing that we were able to do for their good; whose welfare is dearer to us than all worldly enjoyments; alas! that we must be forced to testify to their faces for their condemnation. Ah! Lord, with what a heart must a poor minister study when he considereth this, that all the words that he is studying must be brought in for a witness against many of his hearers. With what a heart must a minister preach when he remembereth that all the words that he is speaking must condemn many, if not most of his hearers? Do we desire this sad fruit of our labours? No; we may say with the prophet, "I have not desired the woful day, thou knowest." (Jer. xvii. 16.) No; if we desired it, we would not do so much to prevent it: we would not study, and preach, and pray, and entreat men, that if it were possible we might not be put on such a task: and, doubtless, it should make every honest minister study hard, and pray hard, and entreat hard, and stoop low to men, and be earnest with men in season and out of season, that if it may be they may not be the condemners of their people's souls. But if men will not hear, and there be no remedy, who can help it? Christ himself came not into the world to condemn men, but to save them, and yet he will condemn those who will not yield to his saving work. God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live: (Ezek. xviii. 23, 32 :) and yet he will rejoice over those to do them hurt, and destroy them who will not return: (Deut. xxviii. 63 :) and if we must be put on such a work, he will make us like-minded. The

Holy Ghost tells us that the saints shall judge the world ; (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3 ;) and if they must judge, they will judge as God judgeth. You cannot blame us for it, sinners. We now warn you of it beforehand, and if you will not prevent it, blame not us, but yourselves. Alas ! we are not our own masters. As we now speak not to you in our own names, so then we may not do what we list ourselves ; or if we might, our will will be as God's will. God will make us judge you, and witness against you : can we absolve you when the righteous God will condemn you ? When God is against you, whose side would you have us be of ? We must be either against God or you ; and can you think that we should be for any one against our Maker and Redeemer ? We must either condemn the sentence of Jesus Christ, or condemn you ; and is not there more reason to condemn you than him ? Can we have any mercy on you, when he that made you will not save you, and he that formed you will show you no mercy ? (Isaiah xxvii. 11 ;) yea, when he that died for you will condemn you, shall we be more merciful than God ? But, alas ! if we should be so foolish and unjust, what good would it do you ? If we would be false witnesses and partial judges, it would not save you ; we are not justified if we absolve ourselves. (1 Cor. iv. 5.) How unable, then, shall we be, against God's sentence, to justify you. If all the world should say you were holy and penitent, when God knows you were unholy and impenitent, it will do you no good. You pray every day that his will may be done, and it will be done. It will be done upon you, because it was not done by you. What would you have us say if God ask us, ' Did you tell this sinner of the need of Christ, of the glory of the world to come, and the vanity of this ? ' Should we lie, and say we did not ? What should we say if he ask us, ' Did not you tell them the misery of their natural state, and what would become of them if they were not made new ? ' Would you have us lie to God, and say we did not ? Why, if we did not, your blood will be required at our hands : (Ezek. xxxiii. 6, and iii. 18 :) and would you have us bring your blood upon our own heads by a lie ? Yea, and to do you no good, when we know that lies will not prevail with God ? No, no, sinners ; we must unavoidably testify to the confusion of your faces : if God ask us, we must bear witness against you, and say, ' Lord, we did what we could, according to our weak abilities, to reclaim them : indeed, our own thoughts of everlasting things were so low, and our hearts so dull, that we must confess we did not follow them

so close, nor speak so earnestly, as we should have done. We did not cry so loud, or lift up our voice as a trumpet to awaken them. (Isaiah lviii. i.) We confess we did not speak to them with such melting compassion, and with such streams of tears beseech them to regard, as a matter of such great concernment should have been spoken with : we did not fall on our knees to them, and so earnestly beg of them, for the Lord's sake, to have mercy upon their own souls, as we should have done. But yet we told them the message of God, and we studied to speak it to them as plainly and as piercingly as we could. Fain we would have convinced them of their sin and misery, but we could not : fain we would have drawn them to the admiration of Christ, but they made light of it. (Matt. xxii. 5.) We would fain have brought them to the contempt of this vain world, and to set their mind on the world to come, but we could not. Some compassion thou knowest, Lord, we had to their souls : many a weeping or groaning hour we have had in secret, because they would not hear and obey, and some sad complaints we made over them in public. We told them that they must shortly die, and come to judgment, and that this world would deceive them, and leave them in the dust. We told them that the time was at hand when nothing but Christ would do them good, and nothing but the favour of God would be sufficient for their happiness, but we could never get them to lay it to heart. Many a time did we entreat them to think soberly of this life, and the life to come, and to compare them together with the faith of Christians, and the reason of men, but they would not do it. Many a time did we entreat them but to take now and then an hour in secret to consider who made them, and for what he had made them, and why they were sent into this world, and what their business here is, and whither they are going, and how it will go with them at their latter end ; but we could never get most of them to spend one hour in serious thoughts of these weighty matters. Many a time did we entreat them to try whether they were regenerate or not, whether Christ and his Spirit were in them or not, whether their souls were brought back to God by sanctification, but they would not try. We did beseech them to make sure work, and not leave such a matter as everlasting joy or torment to a bold and mad adventure, but we could not prevail. We entreated them to lay all other business aside a little while in the world, and to inquire, by the direction of the word of God, what would become of them in the world to come ;

and to judge themselves before God came to judge them, seeing they had the law and rule of judgment before them, but their minds were blinded, and their hearts were hardened, and the profit and pleasure, and honour of this world did either stop their ears, or quickly steal away their hearts, so that we could never get them to a sober consideration, nor ever win their hearts to God.

This will be the witness that many a hundred ministers of the gospel must give in against the souls of their people at that day. Alas ! that you ever should cast this upon us ! For the Lord's sake, sirs, pity your poor teachers, if you pity not yourselves ! We had rather go a thousand miles for you ; we had rather be scorned and abused for your sakes ; we had rather lay our hands under your feet, and beseech you on our knees with tears, were we able, than be put on such a work as this. It is you that will do it if it be done. We had rather follow you from house to house, and teach and exhort you, if you will but hear us, and accept of our exhortation. Your souls are precious in our eyes, for we know they were so in the eyes of Christ, and therefore we are loth to see this day ; we were once in your case, and therefore know what it is to be blind, and careless, and carnal, as you are, and therefore would fain obtain your deliverance. But if you will not hear, but we must accuse you, and we must condemn you, the Lord judge between you and us, for we can witness that it was full sore against our wills. We have been faulty, indeed, in doing no more for you, and not following you with restless importunity ; (the good Lord forgive us !) but yet we have not betrayed you by silence.

2. All those that fear God, that have lived among ungodly men, will also be sufficient witnesses against them. Alas ! they must be put upon the same work, which is very unpleasant to their thoughts, as ministers are ; they must witness before the Lord that they did, as friends and neighbours, admonish them : that they gave them a good example, and endeavoured to walk in holiness before them ; but, alas ! the most did but mock them, and call them puritans, and precise fools, and they made more ado than needs for their salvation : they must be forced to testify, ' Lord, we would fain have drawn them with us to hear the word, and to read it, and to pray in their families, and to sanctify the holy day, and take such happy opportunities for their souls ; but we could not get them to it ; we did in our places what we were able to give them, the example of a godly

conversation, and they did but deride us ; they were readier to mark every slip of our lives, and to observe all our infirmities, and to catch at any accusation that was against us, than to follow us in any work of holy obedience, or care for our everlasting peace.' The Lord knows it is a most heavy thing to consider now, that poor neighbours must be fain to come in against those they love so dearly, and by their testimony to judge them to perdition. Oh ! heavy case to think of, that a master must witness against his own servant ! Yea, a husband against his own wife, and a wife against her husband ; yea, parents against their own children, and say, ' Lord, I taught them thy word, but they would not learn ; I told them what would come on it if they returned not to thee ; I brought them to sermons, and I prayed with them and for them. I frequently minded them of these everlasting things, and of this dreadful day which they now see. But youthful lusts, and the temptations of the flesh and the devil, led them away, and I could never get them thoroughly and soundly to lay it to their hearts.' Oh ! you that are parents, and friends, and neighbours, in the fear of God, bestir you now, that you may not be put to this at that day of judgment. Oh, give them no rest, take no nay of them till you have persuaded their hearts from this world to God, lest you be put to be their condemners. It must be now that you must prevent it, or else never ; now while you are with them, while you and they are in the flesh together, which will be but a little while. Can you but now prevail with them all will be well, and you may meet them joyfully before the Lord.

3. Another witness that will testify against the ungodly at that day, will be their sinful companions. Those that drew them into sin, or were drawn by them, or joined with them in it. Oh ! little do poor drunkards think, when they sit merrily in an alehouse, that one of them must bear witness against another, and condemn one another. If they thought of this, methinks it should make them have less delight in that company. Those that now join with you in wickedness, shall then be forced to witness, ' I confess, Lord, I did hear him swear and curse ; I heard him deride those that feared the Lord, and make a jest of a holy life ; I saw him in the alehouse when he should be hearing the word of God, or reading, or calling upon God, and preparing for this day ; I joined with him in fleshly delights, in abusing thy creature, and our own bodies.' Sinners, look your companions in the face the next time you are with

them, and remember this that I now say, that those men shall give in evidence against you that now are your associates in all your mirth ; little think the fornicator and lustful wanton, that their sinful mates must then bear witness of that which they thought the dark had concealed, and tell their shame before all the world. But this must be the fruit of sin. It is meet that they who once encouraged one another in sin, should condemn one another for it. And marvel not at it, for they shall be forced to it, whether they will or no. Light will not then be hid ; they may think to have some ease to their consciences by accusing and condemning others. When Adam is questioned for his sins, he presently accuseth the woman. (Gen. iii. 12.) When the conscience of Judas was awakened, he runs to the pharisees with the money that drew him to it, and they cast it back in his own face, “ See thou to it, what is that to us ? ” (Matt. xxvii. 4—6.) Oh ! the cold comfort that sinners will have at that day, and the little pleasure that they will find in remembering their evil ways. Now, when a fornicator, or a worldling, or a merry voluptuous man, is grown old, and cannot act all his sin again, he takes pleasure in remembering and telling others of his former folly, what he once was, and what he did, and the merry hours that he had, but then when sinners are come to themselves a little more, they will remember and tell one another of these things with another heart. Oh ! that they did but know how these things will then affect them !

4. Another witness that will then rise up against them will be the very devils that tempted them. They that did purposely draw them to sin, that they might draw them to torment for sin. They can witness that you hearkened to their temptations when you would not hearken to God’s exhortations. They can witness that you obeyed them in working iniquity. But because you may think the accuser’s testimony is not to be taken, I will not stand on this, though it is not nothing where God knoweth it to be true.

5. The very angels of God also may be witnesses against the wicked, therefore are we advised in Scripture not to sin before them. (Eccl. v. 6 ; 1 Cor. xi. 10 ; 1 Tim. v. 21.) I charge thee before the elect angels, &c. They can testify that they would have been ministering spirits for their good, when the wicked rather chose to be slaves to the spirit of maliciousness. The holy angels of God do many a time stand by when you are sinning. They see you when you see not them ; they are em-

ployed by God in some sort for your good as well as we. And as it is the grief of ministers that their labours succeed not, so may we suppose that according to their state and nature it is theirs. For they that rejoice in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, may be said to sorrow, or to lose those joys, when you refuse to be converted. These noble spirits, these holy and glorious attendants of Christ, that shall wait upon him to judgment, will be witnesses against rebellious sinners, to their confusion. Sirs, you have all in you naturally a fear of spirits, and invisible powers; fear them aright, lest hearkening to the deceiving spirits, and refusing the help of the angels of God, and wilfully sinning before their faces, you should cause them, at that day, to the terror of your souls, to stand forth as witnesses against you, to your condemnation.

6. Conscience itself will be a most effectual witness against the wicked at that day; I before told you it will be a discernor, and force them to a confession, but a farther office it hath, even to witness against them. If none else in the world had known of their secret sins, conscience will say, 'I was acquainted with them.'

7. The Spirit of Christ can witness against the ungodly that he oft moved them to repent and return, and they rejected his motions; that he spoke to their hearts in secret, and oft set in with the minister, and often minded them of their case, and persuaded them to God, but they resisted, quenched, and grieved the Spirit. (Acts vii. 51.) As the Spirit witnesseth with the spirits of the righteous that they are the children of God, (Rom. viii. 16,) so doth he witness, with the conscience of the wicked, that they were children of rebellion, and therefore are justly children of wrath. This Spirit will not always strive with men; at last, being vexed, it will prove their enemy, and rise up against them. (Gen. vi. 3; Isa. lxiii. 10.) If you will needs grieve it now, it will grieve you then. Were it not a Spirit of grace, and were it not free mercy that it came to offer you, the repulse would not have been so condemning, nor the witness of this Spirit so heavy at the last. But it was the Spirit of Jesus that came with recovering grace, which you resisted, and though the wages of every sin is death, yet you will find that it will cost you somewhat more to reject this salvation, than to break the Creator's law of works. Kindness, such kindness, will not be rejected at easy rates.

Many a good motion is now made by the Spirit to the heart

of a sinner, which he doth not so much as once observe, and therefore doth not now remember them. But then they shall be brought to his remembrance with a witness. Many a thousand secret motions to repentance, to faith, to a holy life, will be then set before the eyes of the poor, unpardoned, trembling sinner, which he had quite forgotten, and the Spirit of God shall testify to his confusion. At such a sermon I persuaded thy heart to repent, and thou wouldest not; at such a time I showed thee the evil of thy sin, and persuaded thee to have forsaken it, but thou wouldest not. I minded thee in thy secret thoughts of the nearness of judgment, and the certainty and weight of everlasting things, the need of Christ, and faith, and holiness, and of the danger of sinning, but thou didst drown all my motions in the cares and pleasures of the world. Thou hearkenest rather to the devil than to me. The sensual inclinations of thy flesh did prevail against the strongest arguments that I used. Though I showed reasons, undeniable reasons, from thy Creator, from thy Redeemer, from nature, from grace, from heaven, and from hell, yet all would not so much as stop thee, much less turn thee, but thou wouldest go on; thou wouldest follow thy flesh, and now let it pay thee the wages of thy folly; thou wouldest be thy own guide, and take thine own course, and now take what thou gettest by it.

Poor sinners! I beseech you, in the fear of God, the next time you have any such motions from the Spirit of God, to repent, and believe, and break off your sins, and the occasions of them; consider then what a mercy is set before you, and how it will confound you, at the day of judgment, to have all these motions brought in against you, and that the Spirit of grace itself should be your condemner. Alas! that men should choose their own destruction, and wilfully choose it, and that the foreknowledge of these things should not move them to relent!

So much concerning the witness that will be brought in against the sinner.

5. The fifth evidence that will be given against the sinner will be the instruments and effects. You know, among men, if a man be found murdered by the highway, and you are found standing by, with a bloody sword in your hand, especially if there were a former dissension between you, it will be an evidence that will prove a strong presumption that you were the murderer, but if the fact be certain by other evidence, then many such things may be brought for aggravation of the fault.

So a twofold evidence will be brought against the sinner from these things ; one to prove him guilty of the fact, the other to aggravate the fault, and prove that his sin was very great.

For the former, 1. The very creatures which sinners abused to sin, may be brought in against them to their conviction and condemnation. For though these creatures shall be consumed with the last destroying fire, which shall consume all the world, yet shall they have a being in the memory of the sinner, an *esse cognitum*. The very wine or ale, or other liquor, which was abused to drunkenness, may witness against the drunkard. The sweet morsels by which the glutton did please his appetite, and all the good creatures of God which he luxuriously devoured, may witness against him. (Luke xvi. 19, 25.) He that fared deliciously every day in this life, was told by Abraham when he was dead, and his soul in hell, “ Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented ;” though their sweet morsels and cups are past and gone, yet must they be remembered at judgment and in hell. “ Remember, son,” saith Abraham ; yea, and remember he must, whether he will or no. Long was the glutton in sinning, and many a pleasant bit did he taste, and so many evidences of his sin will lie against him, and the sweetness will then be turned into gall.

The very clothing and ornaments by which proud persons did manifest their pride, will be sufficient evidence against them, as his being clothed with purple and fine linen is mentioned. (Luke xvi. 19.)

The very lands, and goods, and houses of worldlings will be an evidence against them. Their gold and silver, which the covetous do now prefer before the everlasting riches with Christ, will be an evidence against them. “ Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten ; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them will be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth ; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabbaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.” (James v. 1—5.) Oh ! that worldlings would well consider this one

text, and therein observe whether a life of earthly pleasure, and fulness of worldly glory and gallantry, be as desirable as they imagine, and to what time and purpose they now lay up their treasures, and how they must hear of these things hereafter, and what effect the review of their jovial days will have upon their miserable, condemned souls.

2. The very circumstances of time, place, and the like, may evidence against his condemnation. The drunkard shall remember, in such an alehouse I was so oft drunk, and in such a tavern I wasted my time. The adulterer and fornicator shall remember the very time, the place, the room, the bed where they committed wickedness. The thief and deceiver will remember the time, place, and the persons they wronged, and the things which they robbed or deceived them of. The worldling will remember the business which he preferred before the service of God, the worldly matters which had more of his heart than his Maker and Redeemer had, the work which he was doing when he should have been praying, or reading, or catechising his family, or thinking soberly of his latter end. A thousand of these will then come into his mind, and be as so many evidences against him to his condemnation.

3. The very effects, also, of men's sins will be an evidence against them. The wife and children of a drunkard are impoverished by his sin; his family and the neighbourhood are disquieted by him. These will be so many evidences against him. So will the abuse of his own reason, the enticing of others to the same sin, and hardening them by his example.

One covetous, unmerciful landlord doth keep an hundred, or many hundred, persons or families in so great necessities, and care, and labour, that they are tempted by it to overpass the service of God, as having scarce time for it, or any room for it in their troubled thoughts; all these miserable families and persons, and all the souls that are undone by this temptation, will be so many evidences against such oppressors.

Yea, the poor whom they have neglected to relieve when they might, the sick whom they have neglected to visit when they might, will all witness then against the unmerciful. (Matt. xxv.)

The many ignorant, worldly, careless sinners that have perished under an idle and unfaithful minister, will be so many witnesses against him to his condemnation. They may then cry out against him to his face, 'I was ignorant, Lord, and he never did so much as teach me, catechise me, nor tell me of

these things. I was careless, and minded the world, and he let me go on quietly, and was as careless as I, and had never plainly and faithfully warned me, to wake me from my security.' And so their blood will be required at his hands, though themselves also shall perish in their sins. (Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8.)

And as these evidences will convince men of sin, so there are many more which will convince them of the greatness of their sin. And these are so many that it would too much lengthen my discourse to stand on them. A few I shall briefly touch.

1. The very mercy of God in creating men, in giving and continuing their being to them, will be an evidence for the aggravation of their sin against him. What, will you abuse Him by whom it is that you are men? Will you speak to his dishonour that giveth you your speech? Will you live to his dishonour who giveth you your lives? Will you wrong him by his own creatures, and neglect Him without whom you cannot subsist?

2. The redemption of men by the Lord Jesus Christ will be an evidence to the exceeding aggravation of their sins. You sinned against the Lord that bought you. (1 Pet. ii. 1.) When the feast was prepared, and all things were ready, you made light of it, and found excuses, and would not come. (Matt. xxii. 4—6; Luke xiv. 17, 18.) Must Christ redeem you, by so dear a price, from sin and misery, and yet will you continue the servants of sin, and prefer your slavery before your freedom, and choose to be Satan's drudges, rather than to be the servants of God? The sorrows and sufferings that Christ underwent for you will then prove the increase of your own sorrows. As a neglected Redeemer it is that he will condemn you; and then you would be glad that it were but true doctrine that Christ never died for you, that you might not be condemned for refusing a Redeemer, and sinning against him that shed his blood for you. How deeply will his wounds then wound your consciences! You will then remember, that to this end he hath died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living, and that he therefore died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. (Rom. xiv. 9; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Matt. xxviii. 18—20; 1 Peter i. 17, 18.) You will then understand that you were not your own, but were bought with a price, and therefore should have glorified him that bought

you, with your bodies and spirits, because they were his. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) This one aggravation of your sin will make you doubly and remedilessly miserable, that you trod under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith you were sanctified, an unholy thing, (Heb. x. 26—29.) and crucified to yourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame. (Heb. vi. 5, 6.)

3. Moreover, all the personal mercies which they received will be so many evidences for the condemnation of the ungodly. The very earth that bore them, and yielded them its fruits, while they themselves are unfruitful to God, the air which they breathed in, the food which nourished them, the clothes which covered them, the houses which they dwelt in, the beasts that laboured for them, and all the creatures that died for their use, all these may rise up against them to their condemnation. And the Judge may thus expostulate with them, ‘Did all these mercies deserve no more thanks? Should you not have served Him that so liberally maintained you? God thought not all these too good for you, and did you think your hearts and services too good for him? He served you with the weary labours of your fellow-creatures, and should you have grudged to bear his easy yoke? They were your slaves and drudges, and you refused to be his free servants and his sons. They suffered death to feed your bodies, and you would not suffer the short forbearance of a little forbidden fleshly pleasure for the sake of him that made you and redeemed you.’

Oh! how many thousand mercies of God will then be reviewed by those that neglected them to the horror of their souls, when they shall be upbraided by the Judge with their base requital! All the deliverances from sickness and from danger, all the honours and privileges, and other commodities, which so much contented them, will then be God’s evidence to shame them and confound them. On this supposition doth the apostle reprove such, “Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hard and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.” (Rom. ii. 4—6.)

4. Moreover, all the means which God used for the recovery of sinners in the day of their visitation will rise up against im-

penitent souls, in judgment to their condemnation. You can hear sermons carelessly and sleepily now; but, oh! that you would consider how the review of them will then awake you! You now make light of the warnings of God and man, and of all the wholesome advice that is given you, but God will not then make light of your contempt. Oh! what cutting questions will they be to the hearts of the ungodly, when all the means that were used for their good are brought to their remembrance on one side, and the temptations that drew them to sin on the other side; and the Lord shall plead his cause with their consciences, and say, ‘Was I so hard a master, or was my work so unreasonable, or were my wages so contemptible, that no persuasions could draw you into my service? Was Satan so good a master, or was his work so honest and profitable, or were his wages so desirable, that you would be so easily persuaded to do as he would have you? Was there more persuading reason in his allurements and deceits than in all my holy words, and all the powerful sermon that you heard, or all the faithful admonitions you received, or all the good examples of the righteous, or in all the works of God which you beheld? Was not a reason fetched from the love of God, from the evil of sin, the blood of Christ, the judgment to come, the glory promised, the torments threatened, as forcible with you, and as good in your eyes to draw you to holiness, as a reason from a little fleshly delight or worldly gain, to draw you to be unholy?’

In the name of God, sinners, I entreat you to bethink yourselves in time, how you will sufficiently answer such questions as these. You should have seen God in every creature you beheld, and have read your duty in all his works; what can you look upon above you, or below you, or round you, which might not have showed you so much of the wisdom, and goodness, and greatness of your Maker, as should have convinced you that it was your duty to be devoted to his will; and yet you have his written word which speaks plainer than all these; and will you despise them all? Will you not see so great a light? Will you not hear so loud and constant calls? Shall God and his ministers speak in vain? And can you think that you shall not hear of this again, and pay for it one day? You have the Bible and other good books by you, why do you not read them? You have ministers at hand, why do you not go to them, and earnestly ask them, Sir, “What must I do to be saved,” and entreat them to teach you the way to life? You have some neigh-

bours that fear God, why do you not go to them, and take their good advice, and imitate them in the fear of God, and in a holy diligence for your souls? Now is the time for you to bestir yourselves; life and death are before you. You have gales of grace to further your voyage. There are more for you than against you. God will help you, his Spirit will help you, the ministers will help you, every good Christian will help you, the angels themselves will help you, if you will resolvedly set yourselves to the work; and yet will you not stir? Patience is waiting on you, mercies are enticing you, scourges are driving you, judgment stayeth for you, the lights of God stand burning by you to direct you, and yet will you not stir, but lie in darkness; and do you not think you shall not hear of this; do you think this will not one day cost you dear?

IX. The ninth part of our work is to show you what are those frivolous excuses by which the unrighteous may then endeavour their defence.

Having already showed you what the defence must be that must be sufficient to our justification:

If any first demand whether the evidence of their sin will not so overwhelm the sinner, that he will be speechless, and past excuse, I answer, before God hath done with him he will be so. But it seems, at first, his dark understanding and partial corrupted conscience, will set him upon a vain defence; for Christ telleth us that "Many will say to me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) And in Matt. xxv. 11, the foolish virgins cry, "Lord! Lord! open to us:" and ver. 44, "Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" and ver. 24, 25, they fear not to cast some of the cause of their neglect on God himself: "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo! there thou hast that is thine."

It is clear, then, that excuses they will be ready to make, and their full conviction will be in order after these excuses, (at least, as in their minds, if not in words.) But what the particular

excuses will be, we may partly know by these Scriptures which recite them, and partly by what the ungodly do now say for themselves : and because it is for their present benefit that I now make mention of them, that they may see the vanity of all such excuses, I will mention them as I now meet with them in the mouths of sinners in our ordinary discourse ; and these excuses are of several sorts—some by which they would justify their estate ; some excuses of particular actions, and that either in whole or in part ; some by which they would put by the penalty, though they confess the sin ; some by which they lay the blame on other men, and in some they would cast it upon God himself. I must touch but some of them very briefly.

The first excuse : ‘ I am not guilty of these things which I am accused of, I did love God above all, and my neighbour as myself : I did use the world but for necessity, but God had my heart.’

Answ. The all-seeing Judge doth know the contrary ; and he will make thy conscience know it. Look back, man, upon thy heart and life ! How seldom and how neglectfully didst thou think of God ! How coldly didst thou worship him, or make any mention of him ! How carelessly didst thou serve him ! And think much of all that thou didst therein. Thou rather thoughtest that his service was making more ado than needs, and didst grudge at those who were more diligent than thyself ; but for the world, how heartily and how constantly didst thou seek and serve it ? And yet wouldst thou now persuade the Judge that thou didst love God above all ? He will show thee thy naked heart, and the course of thy former life, which shall convince thee of the contrary.

The second excuse : ‘ I lived not in any gross sin, but only in small infirmities : I was no murderer, or adulterer, or fornicator, or thief ; nor did I deceive or wrong any, or take any thing by violence.’

Answ. Was it not a gross sin to love the world above God, and to neglect Christ that died for thee, and never to do him one hour’s hearty service, but merely to seek thy carnal self, and to live to thy flesh ? God will open thine eyes then, and show thee a thousand gross sins, which thou now forgettest, or makest light of ; and it is not only gross sin, but all sin, great or small, that deserveth the wrath of God, and will certainly bring thee under it for ever, if thou have not part in Christ to relieve thee. Wo to the man that ever he was born that must answer in his own name for his smallest offences !

The third excuse : ‘ I did it ignorantly ; I knew not that there was so much required to my salvation. I thought less ado might have served the turn ; and that if I looked to my body, God would take care of my soul, and that it was better to trust him what would become of me hereafter, than to trouble my mind so much about it. Had I known better, I would have done better.’

Ans. 1. If you knew not better, who was it along of but yourself? Did God hide these things from you? Did he not tell them you in his word as plainly as the tongue of man can speak, that except you were regenerate and born again, you should not enter into the kingdom of God; (John iii. 3, 5;) that without holiness none should see God; (Heb. xii. 14;) that you must strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able: (Luke xiii. 24:) that if you lived after the flesh you should die; and if by the Spirit you mortified the deeds of the body you should live: (Rom. viii. 13:) that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his; (Rom. viii. 9:) and to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace: (Rom. viii. 9:) that you must not lay up for yourselves a treasure on earth, where rust and moth do corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; but must lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, where rust and moth do not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal: (Matt. vi. 19, 20:) that you must seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof; (Matt. vi. 23;) and not labour for the food that perisheth, but for the food that endureth to everlasting life, which Christ would have given you; (John vi. 27;) that if you be risen with Christ, you must seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth; (Col. iii. 1—3;) yea, your very conversation should be in heaven. (Phil. iii. 19—21.)

What say you? Did not God tell you all this and much more, and plainly tell it you? Turn to your Bibles and see the words, and let them witness against you.

2. And could you think with any reason that your souls being so much more precious than your bodies, you should yet do so much more for your bodies than your souls? Could you think all the labours of your lives little enough for a frail body that must lie shortly in the dirt, and that your immortal souls should be no more regarded? Could you think, with any reason that

your souls should do so much for a life of a few years' continuance, and do no more for a life that shall have no end?

3. And whereas you talk of trusting God with your souls, you did not trust him: you did but on that pretence carelessly disregard them. If you trust God, show any word of promise that ever he gave you to trust upon, that ever an impenitent, carnal, careless person shall be saved? No, he hath told you enough to the contrary: and could you think that it was the will of God that you should mind your bodies more than your souls, and this life more than that to come? Why, he hath bid you strive, and run, and fight, and labour, and care, and seek, and use violence, and all diligence, for the safety of your souls, and for the life to come; but where hath he bid you do so for your bodies? No; he knew that you were prone to do too much for them, and therefore he hath bid you "care not, and labour not," that is, do it as if you did it not; and let your care and labour for earthly things be none, in comparison of that for heavenly things. You know God can as well maintain your lives without your care and labour, as save your souls without it: and yet you see he will not, he doth not. You must plough, and sow, and reap, and thrash, for all God's love and care of you, and not say, 'I will let all alone and trust God.' And must you not much more use diligence in much greater things? If you will trust God, you must trust him in his own way, and in the use of his own means.

The fourth excuse: 'I was never brought up to learning, I cannot so much as read; nor did my parents ever teach me any of these things, but only set me about my worldly business, and provide food and raiment for me, but never once told me that I had a soul to save or lose, and an everlasting life to provide and prepare for, and therefore I could not come to the knowledge of them.'

Ans. The greater is their sin who thus neglected you: but this is no sufficient excuse for you. Heaven is not prepared for the learned only; nor will Christ ask you at judgment whether you are good scholars, or not; no, nor so much as whether you could write or read. But, consider well, was not God's word so plainly written that the unlearned might understand it? Did he not put it into the most familiar style, though he knew it would be offensive so the proud scholars of the world, on purpose that he might fit it to the capacities of the ignorant? And if you could not read, yet tell me, could you not have learned to read

at twenty or thirty years of age, if you had been but willing to bestow now and then an hour to that end ; or, at least, did you not live near some that could read ; and could you not have procured them to read to you, or to help you ; and did you not hear these things read to you in the congregation by the minister, or might have done if you would ; and if your parents did neglect you in your youth, yet when you came to a fuller use of reason, and heard of the matters of salvation from God's word, did it not concern you to have looked to yourselves, and to have redeemed that time which you lost in your youth, by doubling your diligence when you came to riper years ? The apostles gathered churches among heathens who never heard of Christ before, and converted many thousand souls who were never once told of a Saviour, or the way to salvation, till they had passed a greater part of their lives. If you loitered till the latter part of the day, it behoved you then to have bestirred yourselves the more ; and not to say, ' Through the fault of my parents I lost the beginning of my life, and therefore I will lose all ; they taught me not then, and therefore I will not learn now.' Have you not seen some of your neighbours who were as ill educated as yourselves attain to much knowledge afterwards by their industry ; and why might not you have done so if you had been as industrious as they ? may not God and conscience witness that it was because you cared not for knowledge, and would not be at pains to get it, that you knew no more ? Speak truth, man, in the presence of thy Judge ! Was thy heart and mind set upon it ? Didst thou pray daily for it to God ? Didst thou use all the means thou couldst to get it ? Didst thou attend diligently on the word in public, and think of what thou heardest, when thou camest home ? Didst thou go to the minister, or to others that could teach thee, and entreat them to tell thee the way to salvation ? Or didst thou not rather carelessly neglect these matters, and hear a sermon as a common tale, even when the minister was speaking of heaven or of hell ? It was not, then, thine unavoidable ignorance, but thy negligence.

Yea, further, answer as in the presence of God : didst thou obey so far as thou didst know ? Or, didst thou not rather sin against that knowledge which thou hadst ? Thou knewest that the soul was better than the body, and everlasting life more to be regarded than this transitory life, but didst thou regard it accordingly ? Thou, sure, knewest that God was better than the

world, and heaven than earth; at least, thou wast told of it; but didst thou accordingly value him, and love him more? Thou knewest, sure, that there was no salvation without faith, and repentance, and newness of life, and yet they were neglected. In a word, many a thousand sins which were committed, and duties that were omitted, against thy own knowledge and conscience, will mar this excuse.

The fifth excuse: 'I lived not under a powerful minister to tell me of these things, but where there was no preaching at all.'

Answ. And might you not have gone where a powerful minister was, with a little pains? Yea, did not the very plain word that you heard read tell you of these things; and might you not have had a Bible yourselves, and found them there?

The sixth excuse: 'I was a servant, and had no time from my labour to mind these matters: I lived with an hard master, that required all his own work of me, but would allow me no time for the service of God.' Or else, 'I was a poor man, and had a great charge to look after, and with my hard labour had much ado to live, so that I had no time for heavenly things.'

Answ. 1. Who should be first served, God or man? What should be first sought after, heaven or earth? Did not Christ tell thee, "One thing is necessary?" (Luke x. 41, 42.) Was it not as needful to see that you escape damnation, and get safe to heaven when this life ended, as to see that you had food and raiment for yourselves and yours?

2. Did you spend no time in recreation, nor idleness, nor vain talking? Why might not that, at least, have been spent about heavenly things?

3. Could you have taken no time from your rest or eating, or at other intermissions? Man's body will not endure so great labours as have no intermission: and why then might not godliness have been your ease and recreation?

4. Or might you not have minded these things, even when you were about your labour, if you had but a heart to them?

5. At least you might have spent the Lord's own day in hearing, reading, and pondering of these matters, when you were forced to forbear your worldly labours, even by the wholesome law of the land. These, therefore, are all but vain excuses; and God will shortly make thee speak out, and plainly confess, it was not so much for want of time, or helps, or warning, as for want of a heart to use them well. I should have found some time,

though it had been when I should have slept, if my heart had been but set upon it.

The seventh excuse: 'Little did I think to have seen this day. I did not believe that ever God would be so severe. I thought his threatenings had been but to keep men in awe; and I suspected either that the Scripture was not his word, or else I thought he would be better than his word. I thought all that I heard of another life had been uncertain, and therefore was loth to let go a certainty for an uncertainty, and lose my present pleasures which I had in hand for the hopes of that which I never did see.'

Ans. He that will not know his misery by believing to prevent it, shall know it by feeling to endure it. You were told, and told again, what your unbelief would bring you to. Did God's word make heaven and earth? Doth it support and secure them? And is not his word sufficient security for you to have trusted your souls upon? Did you know where was any better security to be had, and where was any surer ground for your confidence? And did you think so basely and blasphemously of God, that he would falsify his word, lest such as you should suffer, and that he was fain to rule the world by a lie? Did God make the world so easily? And can he not govern it by true and righteous means? What need God to say that which he will not do to awe sinners? Can he not awe them by truth? Is it not just that those should eternally perish who will entertain such desperate thoughts of God, and then, by such wicked imaginations, encourage themselves in sin against him?

And for the truth of Scripture, God did not bid you believe it without evidence. He stamped on it the image of his own purity and perfection, that you might know it by that image and superscription, if you had eyes to see them. He sealed it by uncontrolled multitudes of miracles. He delivered it down to your hands by infallible witnesses, so that he left you no room for rational doubting.

And you knew that the matters of this world were not only uncertain, but certainly vain and transitory, and would shortly come to nothing, and leave you in distress. If it had been uncertain whether there were a glory and misery hereafter, (as it was not) should not reason have taught you to prefer the least probabilities of an everlasting unspeakable happiness before that which is certainly perishing and vain? These excuses will but condemn you.

The eighth excuse : ‘ I was so enticed and persuaded by sinners to do as they did, that I could not deny them : they would never let me rest.’

And were you not as earnestly persuaded by God to forsake sin, and serve him, and yet that would not prevail with you ? You could not deny the devils and fools, but you could deny God and all his messengers. Were not ministers as earnest with you every week to repent and amend ? What did men entice you with ? With a little deluding fleshly pleasure for a few days ? And what did God entice you with ? With the promise of endless, inconceivable felicity ! And if this were a smaller matter in your eyes than the other, then you have had your choice, be content with it, and thank yourselves. In your lifetime you had the good things which you chose, and preferred before heaven, and therefore cannot expect to have heaven besides.

The ninth excuse : ‘ I lived among ungodly persons, who derided all that feared God ; so that if I had not done as they did, but had made any more ado to be saved, I should have been the very scorn of the place where I lived.’

Answ. And was not heaven worth the enduring of a scorn ? Is he not worthy to go without it who thinks so basely of it ? Did not Christ tell you that if you were ashamed of him before men, he would be ashamed of you before his Father and the angels of heaven ? (Mark viii. 38.) He suffered more than scorn for you ; and could not you suffer a scorn for him and yourselves ? Seeing you chose rather to endure everlasting torment, than a little derision from ignorant men, take that which you made choice of : and seeing so small a matter would drive you from heaven, and part God and you as a mock, as the wind of a man’s mouth, no wonder if you be commanded to depart from him into everlasting fire.

The tenth excuse : ‘ I had ungodly persons to my parents, or masters, or landlord, or governors, who threatened to undo me if I had addicted myself to so strict a life, and if I would not believe and do as they did.’

Answ. What if they threatened you with present death ? Did not God also threaten you with everlasting death if you were not ruled by him ? And whose threatening should you have chiefly feared ? Is man more dreadful than God ? Is death more terrible than hell ? Did not Christ bid you “ fear

not them that can kill the body, and after that can do no more; but fear him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell-fire? yea, I say unto you, fear him." (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 4, 5.) "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool, but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." (Isaiah li. 7.) Seeing, therefore, you have chosen rather to suffer from God for ever for your sin, than to suffer small matters for well-doing for a moment, you must ever bear your own choice. Christ told you beforehand, that if you could not forsake all the world, and your own lives, for him, you could not be his disciples. (Matt. x. 37—39.) And seeing you thought his terms too hard, and would needs seek you out a better service, even take what you have chosen and found.

The eleventh excuse: 'I saw so many follow their pleasure and their worldly business, and never look after these higher things, and so few go the other way, that I thought sure God would not damn so great a part of the world, and therefore I ventured to do as the most did.'

Ans. God will make good his word upon many or few. Did you doubt of his will, or of his power? For his will—he hath told it you in his word; for his power—he is as able to punish many as one man. What is all the world to him, but as a drop of a bucket, as the dust of the balance? He told you beforehand that the gate was strait, and the way to heaven was narrow, and few did find it; and the gate to destruction was wide, and the way was broad, and many did enter in at it. (Matt. vii. 13, 14.) And if you would not believe him, you must bear what your unbelief hath brought you to. What if you had twenty children, or servants, or friends, and the greater part of them should prove false to you, and seek your destruction, or prove disobedient, and turn to your enemy, would you think it a good excuse if the rest should do the like because of their example? Will you therefore wrong God because you see others wrong him? Would you spit in the face of your own father, if you saw others do so? God warned you that you should not follow a multitude to do evil. (Exod. xxiii. 2.) And if yet you will do as most do, you must even speed as most speed. You should not so much consider who they be as what they do, and whither they go, and who they forsake, and what

they lose, and what strength is in the reasons that move them to do this : and then you would find it is God they forsake, it is sin they choose ; it is heaven they lose, it is hell they run into ; and it is no true reason, but Satan's delusion, and sensual inclinations that lead them to it : and should they be imitated, be they many, or be they few, in such a course as this ?

The twelfth excuse : ' I saw so many faults in those that were accounted godly, and saw so much division among them, that I thought they were as bad as others ; and among so many opinions I knew not what religion to be of.'

Ans. 1. A spot is soonest seen in the fairest cloth ; and the malicious world useth to make such far worse than they are.

2. But suppose all were true that malice saith of some, you could not say the like by others.

3. Or, if you could, yet it was God's law, and not men's faults, that was made the rule for you to live by : will it excuse you that others are bad ?

4. And from their diverse opinions you should have taken counsel at God's word, which was right. Did you first search the Scripture impartially, as willing to know the truth, that you might obey it ? And did you pray daily that God would lead you into truth ? And did you obey as much as you knew ? Did you join with the godly so far as they are all agreed ? They are all agreed in the fundamental articles of Christianity, and in all things absolutely necessary to a holy life, and to salvation ; that all known sin is to be forsaken, and all known duty to be done. Why did you not so far, then, agree with them ? Alas ! the imperfections of the godly, and the false accusations of the malicious world, will prove but a poor cover for your wilful ungodliness, and Christ will convince you of the vanity of these excuses.

The thirteenth excuse : ' The Scriptures were so dark that I could not understand them. And I saw the wisest men differ so much in the exposition of them, that I thought it was in vain for me to trouble myself about them. If God would have had us live according to the Scriptures, he would sure have written them plainly, that men might understand them.'

Ans. 1. It is all plainly written according to the nature of the subject, but a prejudiced, disaffected, yea, or but untaught, disused soul, cannot at first understand the plainest teaching. The plainest Greek or Hebrew grammar that can be written,

will be utterly obscure to him who has but newly entered the English school, yea, after many years' time that he spends in learning. Did you study hard, and pray for God's teaching, and inquire of others, and wait patiently in Christ's school, that you might come to further knowledge by degrees? And were you willing to know even those truths that called you out to self-denial, and that did put you on the hardest flesh-displeasing duties? Had you done thus, you would have admired the light of the holy Scripture, and now have rejoiced that ever you saw them, and not have quarrelled at its seeming darkness. This word might have made you wise to salvation, as it hath done others. (Acts xx. 32; 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.) "This law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Psalm xix. 7, 8.)

2. So much as is of necessity to salvation, is as plain as you could desire. Yet if you be judged by these, you will be condemned, for you did not obey that which was most plain. What darkness is in such words as these, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) "Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) "He that will come after me, let him deny himself," &c. (Matt. xvi. 24.)

3. If there had been nothing that seemed difficult to you, would you not have despised its simplicity, and have thought yourselves wise enough at the first reading, and needed no more?

The fourteenth excuse: 'There were so many seeming contradictions in the Scripture, and so many strange improbable things, that I could not believe it.'

Answ. 1. The contradictions were in your fancy, that did not understand the word which you read. Must the raw, inexperienced learner despise his book or teacher as oft as in his ignorance he thinks he meets with contradictions? Did you think God was no wiser than you, and understood not himself, because you understood him not? Nor could reconcile his own words, because you could not reconcile them? You would needs be a judge of the law, instead of obeying it, and speak evil of it, rather than do it. (James iv. 11.)

2. And these things which you called improbable in the word, were the wonders of God, of purpose to confirm it. If it had not been confirmed by wonders, you would have thought

it unproved, and yet now it is so confirmed, you will not believe the doctrine, because the witness seems incredible. And that is, because they are matters above the power of man, as if they were therefore above the power of God. You shall at last have your eyes so far opened, as to see those seeming contradictions reconciled, and the certainty of those things which you accounted improbable; that you may be forced to confess the folly of your arrogancy and unbelief; and then God will judge you in righteousness, who presumed unrighteously to judge him and his word.

The fifteenth excuse: ‘It seemed so unlikely a thing to me, that the merciful God should damn most of the world to everlasting fire, that I could not believe it.’

Ans. 1. And did it not seem as unlikely to you that his word should be false?

2. Should it not have seemed as unlikely that the Governor of the world should be unjust, and suffer his law to be unexecuted, and the worst to speed as well as the best; and to suffer vile sinful dust to despise his mercy, and abuse his patience, and turn all his creatures against him without due punishment?

3. Did you not feel pain and misery begin in this life?

4. You saw toads and serpents which had never sinned, and you would rather live in any tolerable suffering than to be a toad. And is it not reason that it should go worse with contemptuous sinners, than with those creatures that never sinned?

5. Could you expect that those should come to heaven that would not believe there was such a state, but refused it, and preferred the world before it? And to be out of heaven is to be out of all happiness; and he that is so out of all happiness, and knows that he lost it by his own folly, must needs torment himself with such considerations, were there no other torments: and as man is capable of greater felicity than brutes, so must he needs be capable of more misery.

The sixteenth excuse: ‘The things which God promised in heaven, and threatened in hell, were all out of my sight, and therefore I could not heartily believe them. Had I but once seen them, or spoke with one that had seen them, I should have been satisfied, and have condemned the things of the world.’

Ans. Will you not believe till you see or feel? Was not God’s word sufficient evidence? Would you have believed one from the dead that had told you he had seen such things. And would you not believe Stephen that saw them? (Acts i.

56.) Or Paul, that heard and saw them? (2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.) Nor Christ, that came purposely from heaven to reveal them? Why, flesh and blood cannot see them. You see not God, will you not therefore believe that there is a God? Indeed, whatever you imagine, if you would not believe Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, neither would you have believed though one had risen from the dead, for God's word is more credible than a dead man's, and Christ did rise from the dead to attest it. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed. Noah saw no rain when he was preparing the ark, but because he believed, he made ready and escaped, (Heb. xi. 7,) when the world, that would not believe, did perish. But seeing God's word was of no more weight with you, and no knowledge would serve your turn but by seeing and feeling, you shall see and feel everlastingly to your sorrow.

The seventeenth excuse: 'It was so strict a law that God would have ruled me by, and the way to heaven was so strait and difficult, that I could not endure it. I was not able to deny my flesh, and live such a life.'

Answ. 1. You are not able because you are not willing. What was there but your own wicked hearts that should make such a life seem grievous to you? Every thing is hard and grievous to him who loathes it, and whose heart is against it. The chief thing that God called you to was to love him, and make him your delight, and are love and delight such grievous things? It was not grievous to you to love your meat, or drink, or money. It was no hard matter to you to love a friend that loved you, no, nor to love your sin which was your enemy, and what should make it seem hard to love God but a wicked heart? Is not he better and more lovely than all these? And had you but loved him, all the rest of his service would have seemed easy to you. To think of him, to speak of him, to pray to him, to praise him, yea, to deny all and suffer for him, would have been sweet and pleasant to you, so far as you had loved him. It was not God, therefore, but your own naughty hearts that made his work seem grievous to you, and the way to heaven seem hard. He told you truly that his yoke was easy, and his burthen light, and his commandments were not grievous. (Matt. xi. 29; 1 John v. 3.) They that tried them found them the very joy and delight of their souls, and why could not you do so?

2. But what if the way to heaven had been harder than it

was? Was not heaven worth your labour? Were you afraid of being a loser by it? Could not God requite your labour or sufferings? Doth any repent when they come to heaven that it cost them so dear to come thither? And is not hell worse than the hardest way to heaven? Seeing you have chosen hell to save you labour and suffering in this life, you must have your choice. And seeing you thought not everlasting life to be worth so much as God required, that is, the accepting thankfully, and minding and seeking, and preferring it before this life, you have none to blame for the loss of it but yourselves.

The eighteenth excuse: 'It was God that made me of a sensual nature. He gave me an appetite to meat, and drink, and ease, and lust. He gave me that flesh which ruled me, how then can he condemn me for living according to the nature which he gave me?'

Ans. He gave that appetite to be exercised moderately under the rule of reason, for the preservation and propagation of mankind. But did he not also give you reason to govern that appetite? And the revelation of his will to guide that reason? He gave you your flesh to be a servant, and not a master. Your beast hath fleshly appetite without reason, and therefore God hath put him under you who have reason, that you should rule him. Will you let your beast do what he list, and madly run upon whom you list, and say, you do but let him live according to his nature, which God hath given him? Why, God that gave him such nature, did intend him to be ruled by a higher nature, even by the reason which he gave to you, and so he did also by your flesh and sensual appetite.

The nineteenth excuse: 'But I lived among so many baits which enticed this flesh, that I could not resist them. My meat was a snare to me, my drink a snare, my clothes, my house, my land a snare, every beauty that I saw was a snare. And the better all these were, the stronger was my snare. If God would not have had my heart ensnared and drawn from him, he should not have put so many baits in my way. Yea, and they were so near to me, and daily with me, that though I was resolved to forbear them before, yet when they were brought to my hand, I could not forbear.'

Ans. 1. Is this the thanks that God hath for his mercies? He sent you all these as favours from his own hand. He wrote his own name upon them, that in them you might see his power, and wisdom, and goodness, and so be led up to the consideration

of him, that you might fall in love with himself, who was the fountain, the life, the end of all. And do you overlook God in the creature, and live as without him in the world, and doat upon that which should have drawn you to himself, and then lay the blame on God? If he send a suitor to speak to you in his name, and write you a love-letter with his own hand, will you fall in love with the messenger of the letter, and neglect the sender, and then blame him that wrote his letter on so fair a paper, or in so neat a hand, or that sent it by such a comely messenger? Certainly those excuses are too gross to take with the wise and righteous God, or to seem sufficient to a well-informed conscience.

2. And whereas you speak of the power of these objects, was there not much more in God, in Christ, in the promised glory, to have drawn your heart another way? Why, then, did not these take as much with you as the other? You could not choose, forsooth, but be enticed with such baits as were fitted to your sensual appetite, and such things as a dog or a swine may enjoy as well as a man, but you could choose when Christ and glory were offered you. Yea, you did choose to refuse the offer, and tread them under feet by your neglect. When Satan set your cups, and your harlots, and your profits before you, on one side, did not God set his favour and everlasting happiness on the other side? And was it wise or equal dealing to prefer your lusts before that glory?

3. Moreover, it was not in the power of any of those baits to force your will, or to necessitate you to choose them. They could be but baits to entice you, and it was still in your own choice whether you would yield to the enticement, and choose them or not. Shall every man be false to God that hath any bait to entice him from him? Will you excuse your child or friend if he would be false to you upon as great enticements as these? If a cup of drink, or a whore, or a little gain, could draw him more than all your love and interest, I do not think you would hold him excused.

And whereas you speak of the nearness and continuance of these allurements, I would fain know was not God as near you, and continually near you, to draw you to himself? Faith might have seen him, though flesh and blood cannot. Did he not stand by you when you were in your cups and lustful pleasures? Did he not tell you of the danger, and offer you far better things, if you would obey him and despise those baits? But you would

hearken to none of this ; you should have remembered that he stood over you, and was looking on you, and you should have said, as Joseph, “ How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? ” (Gen. xxxix. 9.) You had also Scripture near you, and reason near you, and conscience near you, as well as the bait was near you, and therefore this is a vain excuse.

The twentieth excuse : ‘ It was God that let loose the devil to tempt me, and he was too subtle for me to deal with, and therefore what wonder if I sinned, and were overcome ? ’

Ans. 1. He did not let loose the devil to constrain you to sin. He could but entice, and you might choose whether you would yield. The devil could neither make you sin against your will, nor yet necessitate you to be willing.

2. You were a sure friend to Christ that while, that would forsake him as oft as you were tempted by the devil. Is that a friend or a servant worthy to be regarded, that will disobey you, or betray you, as oft as he is tempted to it ?

3. Will you excuse your servant if he leave your work undone, and follow cards or dice, or the alehouse, and say, ‘ I was tempted to it by one that was cunninger than I ? ’ Shall every murderer or thief escape hanging because the devil was too cunning for him in his temptations ? Would you have the jury or the judge to take this for a good excuse ?

4. And why did you not hearken to God, that enticed you the other way ? You forgot what helps he afforded you to discover the wiles of Satan, and to vanquish the temptation. He told you it was an enemy that tempted you, and would you hearken to an enemy ? He told you it was a dream, a shadow, a painted pleasure, a gilded carcass, a lying promise, and deceitful vanity, by which you were tempted, and yet would you regard it before your God ? He told you that it was your God, your Saviour, your hope, your everlasting happiness that the tempter would beguile you of, and yet would you be beguiled ? He told you, and plainly, and often told you, that the tempter would lead you to eternal fire, and undo you everlastingly before you were aware, and that a fatal hook was covered with that bait, and yet would you swallow it ?

5. It is plain by all this that it was not your natural weakness of faculties that caused you to be overcome by the subtleties of the devil, as a silly child is deceived by a crafty fellow that overwits him. But it was your careless inconsiderateness, your sensual inclinations, and vicious disposition that drew you to a

wilful obeying of the tempter, and rejecting the wholesome advice of Christ. This, therefore, is a frivolous excuse of your sin.

The one-and-twentieth excuse : ‘ But I hope you will not say that all men have free will, and if my will were not free, how could I chchose but sin ?’

Answ. 1. Your will was not free from God’s rule and government ; 2. Nor was it free from its natural inclination to good in general ; for either of these were more properly slavery. 3. Nor was it free from the influence of a dark understanding. 4. Nor free from its own contracted, vicious inclination. 5. Nor freed from the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil.

But it was, 1. Free from any natural determination to evil, or to any thing that was doubtful. 2. And free from the co-action or violence of any. 3. And free from an irresistible determination of any exterior cause, at least ordinarily. So that naturally, as men, you have the power or faculty of determining your own wills, of ruling your inferior faculties in a great measure, yea, of ruling the senses and the fantasy itself, which doth so much to dispose of our understanding. And if your wills, which are naturally free, are yet so habitually vicious that they incline you to do evil, that is not an excuse, but an aggravation of your sin. But of this more under the next.

The two-and-twentieth excuse : ‘ But I have not power of myself to any thing that is good. What can the creature do ? Without Christ, we can do nothing. It is God that must give me ability, or I can have none, and if he had given it me, I had not been an unbeliever or impenitent. I can no more believe of myself, than I can fulfil the law of myself.’

Answ. 1. These are the vain cavils of learned folly, which God will easily answer in a word. The word “ power ” is taken in several senses. Sometimes, and most commonly and fitly, for a faculty or a strength by which a man can do his duty if he will. This physical power you have, and the worst of sinners have, while they are men on earth. Were they actually willing, they might acceptably perform sincere obedience, and were they dispositively willing, they might actually believe and will. And thus the ungodly have power to believe.

Sometimes the word “ power ” is taken for authority or leave, for legal or civil power. And thus you have all not only power or liberty to believe, but also a command which makes it your duty, and a threatening adjoined, which will condemn you if you do not.

Sometimes the word "power" is taken ethically and less properly, for a disposition, inclination, habit, or freedom from the contrary habit or disposition. And in this sense it is true that none but the effectually called have a power to believe. But then observe, 1. That this is but a moral less proper, and not a physical proper impotency, and therefore Austin chooseth rather to say that all men have power to believe, but all have not a will, or faith itself, because we use to difference power from willingness, and willingness actuateth the power which we had before. And therefore our divines choose rather to call grace a habit, when they speak exactly, than a power; and Dr. Twiss derides the Arminians for talking of a power subjected in a power. 2. Note, that this impotency is but the same thing with your unwillingness, and wilful blindness in another word. 3. Note, that this impotency is along of yourselves as to the original, and much more as to the not curing, or removing of it. Hath God given you no means towards the cure of this disability, which you have neglected? 4. Note, that this impotency is no just excuse, but an aggravation of your sin. If you were willing to be the servant of Christ, and yet were not able, either because he would not accept you, or because of a want of natural faculties, or because of some other natural difficulty which the willingest mind could not overcome, this were some excuse, but to be habitually wilful in refusing grace, is worse than to be merely, actually unwilling. If a man have so accustomed himself to murder, drunkenness, stealing, or the like wickedness, so far that he cannot leave it, will you therefore forgive him? Or will any judge or jury hold him excused? Or rather think him the more unfit for mercy? 5. Note, also, that the want of a supernatural habit, no, nor the presence of the contrary habit, do not efficiently determine the will to particular acts, much less take away its natural freedom. 6. And that till habits attain an utter predominancy, (at least) there is a power remaining in the will to resist them, and use means against them, though eventually the perverse inclination may hinder the use of it.

The three-and-twentieth excuse: 'I have heard from learned men that God doth determine all actions, natural and free, as the first efficient physical immediate cause, or else nothing could act. And then it was not along of me that I chose forbidden objects, but of him that irresistibly moved me thereto, and whose instrument I was.'

Answ. This is a trick of that wisdom which is foolishness with God, and to be deceived by vain philosophy.

1. The very principle itself is most likely to be false, and those that tell you this do err. Much more, I think, may be said against it than for it.

2. I am sure it is either false or reconcileable with God's holiness, and man's liberty and culpability; so that it is a mad thing to deceive yourselves with such philosophical uncertainties, when the truth which you oppose by it is infallibly certain. That God is not the author of sin, but man himself, who is justly condemned for it, is undoubtedly true, and would you obscure so clear a truth by searching into points beyond human reach, if not unsound, as you conclude them.

The four-and-twentieth excuse: 'But at least those learned divines among us that doubt of this, do yet say that the will is necessarily and infallibly determined by the practical understanding, and that is as much irresistibly necessitated by objects, and therefore whatever act was done by my understanding or will, was thus necessitated, and I could not help it. They say, liberty is but the acting of the faculty agreeably to its nature, and it was God, as Creator, that gave Adam his faculties, and God, by providential dispose, that presented all objects to him, by which his understanding, and so his will, were unavoidably necessitated.'

Answ. This is of the same nature with the former, uncertain, if not certainly false. Were this true, for ought we can see, it would lay all the sin and misery of this world on God, as the irresistible necessitating cause, which because we know infallibly to be false, we have no reason to take such principles to be true which infer it. The understanding doth not, by a necessary efficiency, determine the will, but morally, or rather, is regularly a condition, or necessary antecedent, without which it may not determine itself. Yea, the will, by commanding the sense and fantasy, doth much to determine the understanding. As the eye is not necessary to my going, but to my going right, so is not the understanding's guidance necessary to my willing, (there the simple apprehension may suffice,) but to my right willing. There are other ways of determining the will. Or, if the understanding did determine the will, efficiently and necessarily, it is not every act of the understanding that must do it. If it be so when it saith, 'This *must* be done,' and saith importunately, yet not when it only saith, 'This may be done,' or you

may venture on it, which is the common part which it hath in sin.

I am not pleased that these curious objections fall in the way, nor do I delight to put them into vulgar heads; but finding many young scholars, and others that have conversed with them, assaulted with these temptations, I thought meet to give a touch, and but a touch, to take them out of their way, as Mr. Fenner hath done more fully in the preface to his *Hidden Manna*, on this last point, to which I refer you. I only add this:

The will of man in its very dominion doth bear God's image. It is a self-determining power, though it be biassed by habits, and needs a guide. As the heart and vital spirits by which it acteth are to the rest of the body, so is it to the soul. The light of nature hath taught all the world to carry the guilt of every crime to the will of man, and there to leave it. Upon this all laws and judgments are grounded. From ignorance and intellectual weakness, men commonly fetch excuses for their faults, but from the will they are aggravated. If we think it strange that man's will should be the first cause, so much as of a sinful mode, and answer all occurring objections, it may suffice that we are certain the Holy Majesty is not the author of sin, and he is able to make all this as plain as the sun, and easily answer all these vain excuses, though we should be unable: and if we be much ignorant of the frame and motions of our own souls, and especially of that high, self-determining principle, free will, the great spring of our actions, and the curious engine by which God doth sapiently govern the world, it is no wonder, considering that the soul can know itself but by reflection, and God gave us a soul to use, rather than to know itself, and to know its qualities and operations, rather than its essence.

The five-and-twentieth excuse: 'No man can be saved, nor avoid any sin, nor believe in Christ, but those whom God hath predestinated thereto. I was under an irreversible sentence before I was born, and therefore I do nothing but what I was predestinated to do, and if God decreed not to save me, how could I help it?'

Ans. 1. God's judgments are more plain, but his decrees or secret purposes are mysterious, and to darken certainties by having recourse to points obscure, is no part of Christian wisdom. God told you your duty in his word, and on what terms you

must be judged to life or death ; hither should you have recourse for direction, and not to the unsearchable mysteries of his mind.

2. God decreeth not to condemn any but for sin. Sin, I say, is the cause of that condemnation, though not of his decree.

3. God's decrees are acts immanent in himself, and make no change on you, and therefore do not necessitate you to sin, any more than his foreknowledge doth. For both cause only a necessity of consequence which is logical, as the divines on both sides do confess. And therefore this no more caused you to sin, than if there had been no such decree. And it is a doubt whether that decree be not negative, a willing suspending of the divine will, as to evil, or at most a purpose to permit it.

The six-and-twentieth excuse : ' If it be no more, yet doth it make my perdition unavoidable, for even God's foreknowledge doth so ; for if he foreknow it, all the world cannot hinder it from coming to pass.'

Answ. Must God either be ignorant of what you will do, or else be the cause of it ? You foreknow that the sun will rise to-morrow, that doth not cause it to rise. If you foreknow that one man will murder another, you are not the cause of it by foreknowing it. So is it here.

The seven-and-twentieth excuse : ' God might have hindered my sin and damnation if he would.'

Answ. And will you wilfully sin, and think to escape, because God doth not hinder you ? The prince that makes a law against the murder, could lock you up, and keep you from being a murderer. But are you excusable if he do not ? We are certain that God could have hindered all the sin, and death, and confusion, and misery that is in the world, and we are as certain that he doth not hinder it but by forbidding it, and giving men means against it, and we are certain that he is just, and good, and wise in all, and not bound to hinder it, and what his reasons are you may better know hereafter. In the mean time, you had better have looked to your own duty.

The eight-and-twentieth excuse : ' How could I be saved if Christ did not die for me ? He died but for his elect, and none could be saved without his death.'

Answ. He did die for you, and for more than his elect, though he absolutely purposed only their salvation. Your sins crucified him, and your debt lay upon him, and he so far ransomed you, that nothing but your wilful refusal of the benefits could have condemned you.

The nine-and-twentieth excuse : ‘ It was Adam’s sin that brought me into this depravedness of will, which I can neither cure, nor could prevent.’

Ans. 1. If Adam cast away his holiness, he could no more convey that to us which he cast away, than a nobleman that is a traitor can convey his lost inheritance or honours to his son.

2. You perish, not only for your original sin, but for rejecting the recovering mercy of the Redeemer. You might have had Christ and life in him for the accepting.

The thirtieth excuse : ‘ God will require no more than he gives. He gave me not grace to repent and believe, and without his gift I could not have it.’

Ans. 1. God will justly require more than he giveth, that is, the improvement of his gifts, as Matt. xxv. shows. He gave Adam but a power to persevere, and not actual perseverance, yet did he justly punish him for want of the act, even for not using by his own will the power which he had given him.

2. It is along of yourself if God did not give you grace to believe ; it was because you wilfully refused some preparatory grace. Christ found you at a great distance from him, and he gave you grace sufficient to have brought you nearer to him than you were ; you had grace sufficient to have made you better than you were, and restrained many sins, and brought you to the means, when you turned your back on them. Though this were not sufficient to cause you to believe, it was sufficient to have brought you nearer to believing, and through your own wilfulness became not effectual ; even as Adam had sufficient grace to have stood, which was not effectual. So that you had not only Christ offered to you, if you would but accept him, but you had daily and precious helps and means to have cured your wills, and caused you to accept him, for neglect of which, and so for not believing, and so for all your other sins, you justly perish.

The one-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ Alas ! man is a worm, a dry leaf, (Job xiii. 25,) a silly, foolish creature, and therefore his actions be not regardable, nor deserve so great a punishment.’

Ans. Though he be a worm, and as nothing to God, and foolish by sin, yet he is naturally so noble a creature, that the image of God was on him ; (Gen. xii. 26. and v. i ; James iii. 9;) and the world made his servants, and angels his attendants. (Heb. i. 14.) So noble, that Christ died for him, God takes special care of him ; he is capable of knowing and

enjoying God, and heaven is not thought too good for him if he will obey. And he that is capable of so great good, must be capable of as great evil, and his ways not to be so overlooked by that God that hath undertaken to be his Governor. When it tendeth to infidelity, the devil will teach you to debase man, even lower than God would do.

The two-and-thirtieth excuse: ‘ Sin is no being ; and shall men be damned for that which is nothing ? ’

Answ. 1. It is such a mode as deformeth God’s creature. It is a moral being ; it is a relation of our actions and hearts to God’s will and law.

2. They that say sin is nothing, say pain and loss are nothing too. You shall, therefore, be paid with one nothing for another. Make light of your misery, and say it is nothing, as you did of your sin.

3. Will you take this for a good excuse from your children or servants if they abuse you ? or, from a thief or a murderer ? Shall he escape by telling the Judge that his sin was nothing ? or, rather have death, which is nothing, as the just reward of it ?

The three-and-thirtieth excuse: ‘ But sin is a transient thing ; at least it doth God no harm, and therefore why should he do us so much harm for it ? ’

Answ. 1. It hurts not God, because he is above hurt. No thanks to you if he be out of your reach.

2. You may wrong him, when you cannot hurt him ; and the wrong deserves as much as you can bear. If a traitor endeavour the death of the prince in vain, his endeavour deserves death, though he never hurt him. You despise God’s law and authority ; you cause the blaspheming of his name ; (Rom. ii. 24 ;) he calls it a pressing him as a cart is pressed with sheaves, (Amos ii. 13,) and a grieving of him.

3. And you wrong his image, his church, the public good, and the souls of others.

The four-and-thirtieth excuse: ‘ But God’s nature is so good and merciful, that sure he will not damn his own creatures. ’

Ausw. 1. A merciful judge will hang a man for a fault against man ; by proportion, then, what is due for sin against God ?

2. All the death and calamity which you see in the world, comes from the anger of this merciful God ; why, then, may not future misery come from it ?

3. God knoweth his own mercy better than you do ; and he hath told you how far it shall extend.

4. He is infinitely merciful ; but it is to the heirs of mercy, not to the final rejectors of his mercy.

Hath not God been merciful to thee in bearing with thee so long, and offering thee grace in the blood of Christ till thou didst wilfully reject it ? Thou wilt confess, to thy everlasting woe, that God was merciful ; had he not been so merciful, thou wouldst not have been so miserable for rejecting it.

The five-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ I would not so torment mine enemy myself.’

Ans. No reason you should. Is it all one to wrong you, and to wrong the God of heaven ? God is the only judge of his own wrongs.

The six-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ All men are sinners, and I was but a sinner.’

Ans. All were not impenitent, unbelieving, rebellious sinners, and therefore all are not unpardoned, condemned sinners. All did not live after the flesh, and refuse to the last to be converted, as you did. God will teach you better to difference between sinners and sinners.

The seven-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ But if Christ have satisfied for my sins, and died for me, then how can I justly suffer for the same sins ? will God punish one sin twice ?

Ans. 1. Christ suffered for man in the nature of man, but not in your person, nor you in him. It was not you that provided the price, but God himself ; Christ was not man’s delegate in satisfying, and therefore received not his instructions from us, nor did it on our terms, but his own. It was not the same thing which the law threatened that Christ underwent ; for that was the damnation of the sinner himself, and not the suffering of another for him ; it cannot therefore be yours, but on Christ’s own terms. He died for thy sin, but with this intent, that for all that, if thou refuse him, thou shalt die thyself. It is therefore no wrong to thee to die, for it was not thou that diedst before : and Christ will take it for no wrong to him ; for he will judge thee to that death. It is for refusing a Christ that died for thee that thou must perish for ever.

The eight-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ But I did not refuse Christ : I believed and trusted in him to the last ; and repented for my sins, though I sometimes was overtaken by them.’

Ans. Had this been true, thy sin would not have condemned

thee : but there is no mocking God ; he will show thee then thy naked heart, and convince thousands that thought they believed and repented, that indeed they did not. By thy works, also, will this be discovered, this is, by the main bent and scope of thy life, as Matt. xxv. throughout, and James ii.

The nine-and-thirtieth excuse : ‘ I did many good works ; and I hope God will set those against my evil works.’

Answ. Thy good works were thy sins, because, indeed, they were not good, being not done in sincerity of heart for God. The best man’s works have some infirmity, which nothing can cleanse but the blood of Christ, which thou hast made light of, and therefore hast no part in. If all thy life had been spent in perfect works except one day, they would not make satisfaction for the sins of that day, for they are but part of thy duty. Wo to him that hath no better a Saviour at judgment than his own good works !

The fortieth excuse : ‘ I have lived in poverty and misery on earth, and therefore I hope I have had my suffering here, and shall not suffer in this world and another too.’

Answ. 1. By that rule all poor men, and murderers, and thieves that are tormented and hanged, should be saved. But as godliness hath the promise of this life and that to come, so impenitency and wickedness hath the threatening of this life and that to come.

2. The devils and the damned have suffered much more than you already, and yet they are never the nearer a deliverance. When thou hast suffered ten thousand years, thy pain will be never the nearer an end. How, then, can a little misery on earth prevent it ? Alas ! poor soul, these are but the foretastes and beginnings of thy sorrow. Nothing but pardon through the blood of Christ could have prevented thy condemnation ; and that thou rejectest by infidelity and impenitency. His sufferings would have saved thee if thou hadst not refused him, but all thy own sufferings will yield thee no relief.

So much for the answering of the vain excuses which poor sinners are ready to make for themselves, wherein I have been so large, as that this part, I confess, is disproportionable to the rest : but it was for these two reasons.

1. That poor careless souls might see the vanity of such defences : and consider, if such a worm as I can easily confute them, how easily and how terribly will they be all answered by their Judge !

2. I did it the rather, that godly Christians might the better understand how to deal with these vain excuses when they meet with them, which will be daily, if they deal with men in this sad condition.

X. We have done with that part of the judgment which consisteth in the exploration or trial of the cause. We now come to that which is the conclusion and consummation of all; and that is, to show you what the sentence will be, and on whom.

And for this we must go straight to the word of God for our light, it being impossible for any man to have any particular knowledge of it, if Christ had not there revealed it unto us. Indeed, almost all the world do acknowledge a life after this, where it shall go well with the good, and ill with the bad. But who shall be then accounted righteous, and who unrighteous, and on what terms and grounds, by whom they shall be judged, and to what condition, they know not.

The sentence in judgment will be, 1. Either on those that never had means to know Christ; 2. Or on those that had.

1. For the former, as it less concerneth us to inquire of their case, so it is more obscurely revealed to us in the Scripture. It is certain that they shall be judged according to their use of the means which they had, (Rom. ii. 11—16,) and the talents which they received. (Matt. xxv.) But that it falleth out that he that hath but the one talent of natural helps doth improve it to salvation; or that ever they, who knew not Christ, are justified and saved without that knowledge, (being at age and use of reason,) I find not in the Scriptures. I find, indeed, that as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. (Rom. ii. 12.) But not that any that are justified by the works of nature, such as are here said to be without law. I find also that “they have the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing, one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the gospel.” (Rom. ii. 15, 16.) And I believe it is a just excuse, and not an unjust, which is here meant. But it will be but an excuse so far as they were guiltless; and that will be but *in tanto*, and not *in toto*, in part only, and so not a full justification. A heathen’s conscience may excuse him from those sins which he was never guilty of, but not from all. But no more of them.

2. The case of those who have had the gospel is more plainly opened to us in God's word. Their sentence is opened in many places of Scripture, but most fully in Matt. xxv., whence we will now collect it.

There we find that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, as King of the world, shall sit in judgment on all men at the last, and shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and so shall pass the final sentence. This sentence is two-fold, according to the different condition of them that are judged. To them on the right hand there is a sentence of justification, and adjudication to everlasting glory; to them on the left hand there is a sentence of condemnation to everlasting punishment.

The sentence on each of these containeth both the state which they are judged to, and the reason or cause of the judgment to that state: for as God will not judge any to life or death without just cause, so he will publish this cause in his sentence, as it is the manner of judges to do; if you say, 'Christ will not use a voice,' let it satisfy that though we know not the manner, yet if he do it but by mental discovery, as he shows men what shall everlastingly befall them, so he will show them why it shall so befall them.

1. The sentence on them on the right hand will contain, 1. Their justification, and adjudication to blessedness, and that both, as generally denominated, and as particularly determined and described. 2. And the cause of this judgment. 1. In general they shall be pronounced blessed; Satan would have had them cursed and miserable. The law did curse them to misery; many a fearful thought hath possessed their own breasts, lest they should prove at last accursed and miserable: but now they hear the contrary from their Judge. All the promises in the gospel could not perfectly overcome those their fears; all the comfortable words of the ministers of the gospel could not perfectly subdue them; all the tender mercies of God in Christ could not perfectly subdue them; but now they are vanished all for ever. He that once had heard his Redeemer in judgment call him "blessed," will never fear being cursed more; for he that Christ blessed, shall be blessed indeed.

The description of their blessedness followeth, "Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" and also they are called "blessed of the Father." Here is the fountain of their blessedness—the Father, and the state

of their blessedness in being the Father's; for I suppose they are called "the blessed of the Father," both because the Father blessed them, that is, makes them happy, and because these blessed ones are the Father's own: and so Christ will publish it to the world in judgment, that he came to glorify the Father, and will proclaim him the principal efficient, and ultimate end of his work of redemption, and the blessedness of his saints; and that himself is, as Mediator, but the way to the Father. It is the Father that "prepared" the kingdom for them, and "from the foundation of the world" prepared it; both for them, as chosen ones, and for them as future believers and righteous ones. It is called a kingdom, partly in respect to God, the King, in whose glory we shall partake in our places; and partly metaphorically, from the dignity of our condition. For so it is that ourselves are said to be made kings, (Rev. i. 6., and v. 1; 1 Peter ii. 9,) and not that we are properly kings, for then we must have subjects who must be governed by us.

Thus we see their blessedness in the fountain, end, and state of dignity. As to the receptive act on their part, it is expressed by two words; one signifying their first entrance on it—"come," the other their possession—"inherit:" that is, possess it as given by the Father, and redeemed by the Son, and hold it in this tenure for ever.

The true believer was convinced in this life that, indeed, there was no true blessedness but this enjoyment of God in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord revealed this to his heart by his word and Spirit; and therefore he contemned the seeming happiness on earth, and laid up for himself a treasure in heaven, and made him friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and ventured all his hope in this vessel. And now he findeth the wisdom of that choice in a rich return. God made him so wise a merchant as to sell all for this pearl of greatest price, and therefore now he shall find the gain. As there is no other true happiness but God in glory, so there is nothing more suitable and welcome to the true believer. Oh! how welcome will the face of that God be, whom he loved, whom he sought, whom he longed and waited for. How welcome will that kingdom be which he lived in hope of; which he parted with all for, and suffered for in the flesh! How glad will he be to see the blessed face of his Redeemer, who, by his manifold grace, hath brought him unto this! I leave the believing soul to think of

it, and to make it the daily matter of his delightful meditation; what an inconceivable joy, in one moment, this sentence of Christ will fill his soul with. Undoubtedly, it is now quite past our comprehensions, though our imperfect forethoughts of it may well make our lives a continual feast.

Were it but our justification from the accusations of Satan, who would have us condemned either as sinners in general, or as impenitent, unbelieving rebels against him that redeemed us in special, it would lift up the heads of the saints in that day. After all the fears of our own hearts, and the slanderous accusations of Satan and the world, that we were either impenitent infidels, or hypocrites, Christ will then justify us, and pronounce us righteous. So much for the condition to which they are judged.

2. The reason or cause of this justification of the saints is given us both, 1. In a general denomination, and, 2. In a particular description. 1. In general, it is because they were righteous, as is evident, Matt. xxv. 46, "The righteous shall go into life everlasting." And, indeed, it is the business of every just judge to justify the righteous, and condemn the unrighteous: and shall not the Judge of all the earth judge righteously? (Gen. xviii. 25.) God makes men righteous before he judges them so, and judgeth them righteous because they are so. He that abominateth that man who saith to the righteous, 'Thou art wicked,' or to the wicked, 'Thou art righteous,' who justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the righteous, will certainly never do so himself.

Indeed, he will justify them who are sinners, but not against the accusation that they are sinners, but against the accusation that they are guilty of punishment for sin: but that is because he first made them just, and so justifiable, by pardoning their sin through the blood of Christ.

And it is true also that he will justify those that were wicked, but not those that are wicked: but judgment findeth them as death leaveth them; and he will not take them for wicked who are sanctified and cleansed of their former wickedness. So that Christ will first pardon them before he justify them against the charge of being sinners in general; and he will first give men faith, repentance, and new obedience, before he will justify them against the charge of being impenitent infidels, or hypocrites, and consequently unpardoned, and doubly guilty of

damnation. This two-fold righteousness he will first give men, and so constitute them just, before he will declare it, and sentence them just.

2. The reason of the sentence particularly described, is from their faith and love to Christ, expressed in their obedience, self-denial, and forsaking all for him. "For I was hungry, and ye fed me; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came to me. Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 35—41.) Here is, 1. The causal conjunction "for." 2. And the cause or reason itself.

Concerning both which observe, 1. How it is that man's obedience and self-denial is the reason and cause of his justification. 2. Why it is that God will have the reason or cause thus declared in the sentence.

For the first, observe that it is one thing to give a reason of the sentence, and another thing to express the cause of the benefit given us by the promise, and judged to us by the sentence. Man's obedience was no proper cause why God did, in this life, give pardon of sin to us, or a right to glory; much less of his giving Christ to die for us: and therefore, as to our constitutive justification at our conversion, we must not say or think that God doth justify us, for, or because of, any works of our obedience, legal or evangelical. But when God hath so justified us, when he comes to give a reason of his sentence in judgment, he may and will fetch that reason partly from our obedience, or our performance of the conditions of the new covenant: for, as in this life, we had a righteousness consisting in free pardon of all sin through the blood of Christ, and a righteousness consisting in our personal performance of the conditions of the promise which giveth that pardon, and continueth it to us, so at judgment we shall accordingly be justified. And as our evangelical personal righteousness, commonly called inherent, was at first only in our faith and repentance, and disposition to obey; but afterwards in our actual sincere obedience, in which sense we are constitutively justified, or made righteous here by our works, in James's sense; (James ii. 24;) so, accordingly, a double reason will be assigned of our sentential justification; one from our pardon by Christ's blood and merits, which will prove our right to impunity and glory, the other from our own faith

and holy obedience, which will prove our right to that pardon through Christ, and to the free gift of a right to glory : and so this last is to be pleaded in subordination to the former, for Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. (Heb. v. 9.) He, therefore, that will be saved, must have a Christ to save him as the author, and an obedience to that Christ as the condition of that salvation ; and consequently both must be declared in the judgment.

The reason why the Judge doth mention our good works, rather than our believing, may be because those holy, self-denying expressions of faith and love to Christ do contain or certainly imply faith in them, as the life of the tree is in the fruit ; but faith doth contain our works of obedience but only as their cause. These works also are a part of the personal righteousness which is to be inquired after ; that is, we shall not be judged righteous merely because we have believed, but also because we have added to our faith virtue, and have improved our talents, and have loved Christ to the hazard of all for his sake : for it is not only, or principally, for the goodness of the work considered in itself, or the good that is done by it to the poor ; but it is as these works did express our faith and love to Christ by doing him the most costly and hazardous service ; that by faith we could see Christ in a poor beggar, or a prisoner ; and could love Christ in these better than our worldly goods or liberties, which we must part with, or hazard by the works that are here mentioned.

2. The reasons why Christ will so publicly declare the personal righteousness of men to be the reason or cause of his justifying sentence, are because it is the business of that day, not only to glorify God's mere love and mercy, but eminently to glorify his remunerative justice ; and not only to express his love to the elect as such, but to express his love to them as faithful and obedient, and such as have denied all for Christ, and loved God above all ; and to show his justice to the men, and faithfulness in fulfilling all his promises, and also his holiness in the high estimation of the holiness of his people. I shall express this in the words of a learned divine : (Dr. Twiss against Mr. Cotton, page 40 :) ' Was there no more in God's intention when he elected some, than the manifestation of the riches of his glorious grace ? Did not God purpose also to manifest the glory of his remunerative justice ? Is it not undeniable that God will bestow salvation on all his elect (of ripe years) by way of reward

and crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give? (2 Tim. iv.; 2 Thess. i.) It is great pity this is not considered, as usually it is not, especially for the momentous consequence thereof in my judgment.' So far he.

So much of the sentence of justification which shall be passed by Christ, at judgment, upon the righteous.

2. We are next to consider of the sentence of condemnation which shall then, by Christ, be passed on the unrighteous; which is delivered to us by Christ, (Matt. xxv.,) in the same order as the former.

This sentence containeth, 1. The condemnation itself. 2. The reason or cause of it.

The condemnation expresseth the misery which they are judged to. 1. Generally in the denomination "cursed." 2. Particularly by description of their cursed state.

To be cursed, is to be a people destinated and adjudged to utter unhappiness; to all kinds of misery without remedy.

2. Their cursed condition is described in the next words; "Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

1. "Depart:" From whom? From the God that made them in his image; from the Redeemer that bought them by the price of his blood, and offered to save them freely for all their unworthiness, and many a time entreated them to accept his offer, that their souls might live; from the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier and Comforter of the faithful, who strove with their hearts, till they quenched and expelled him. Oh! sad departing! Who would not then choose rather to depart from all the friends he had in the world, and from any thing imaginable; from his life, from himself, if it were possible, than from Christ? "Depart:" From what? Why from the presence of the Judge, from all further hopes of salvation for ever, from all possibility of ever being saved, and living in the joyful inheritance of the righteous. "Depart:" Not from God's essential presence, for that will be with them to their everlasting misery, but from the presence of his grace, in that measure as they enjoyed it. "Depart:" Not from your fleshly pleasures, and honours, and profits of the world, these were all gone and passed already, and there was no further need to bid them depart from these. Houses and lands were gone, mirth and recreations were gone, their sweet morsels and cups were gone, all the honour that men could give them was gone, before they were set at Christ's bar

to be judged. But from all expectations of ever enjoying these again, or ever tasting their former delights, from these they must depart: not from their sin, for that will go with them. But the liberty of committing that part of it which was sweet to them, as gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, idleness, and all voluptuousness—from these they must depart. But this is consequential. It is Christ and the possibility of salvation that they are sentenced to depart from.

But whither must they depart? 1. Into fire. 2. Into that fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. 3. Into everlasting fire.

1. Not into a purifying, but a tormenting, fire. Whether elementary or not, whether properly or metaphorically called fire, let us not vainly trouble ourselves to inquire. It is enough to know, that as fire is one of the most grievous tormentors of the flesh, so grievous will be those infernal torments to the whole man, soul and body, such as is most fitly represented to us under the notion of fire, and of burning. It is easy for a secure, unbelieving soul to read and hear of it; but wo, and ten thousand woes to them that must endure it! In this life they had their good things, when it went harder as to the flesh with better men; but now they are tormented, when the godly are comforted. (Luke xvi. 25.)

2. But why is it called “a fire prepared for the devil and his angels?” 1. What is this devil that hath angels? 2. Who are his angels? 3. When was it prepared for them? 4. Was it not also prepared for wicked men? To these in order.

1. It seems by many passages in Scripture that there is an order among spirits, both good and bad; and that there is one devil, who is the prince over the rest.

2. It seems, therefore, that it is the rest of the evil spirits that are called “his angels.” And some think that the wicked who served him in this life shall be numbered with his angels in the life to come. Indeed, the apostle calls him, “the god of this world,” (2 Cor. iv. 4,) as is ordinarily judged by expositors; and “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;” (Eph. ii. 2;) and he calleth false, seducing teachers “the ministers of Satan:” (2 Cor. xi. 15 :) but that wicked men are here meant as part of his angels is not clear.

3. If it be the preparation of God’s purpose that is here meant, then it was from eternity: but if it be any commination

of God as ruler of the angels, then was this fire prepared for them conditionally, from the beginning of that commination, and was due to them at their fall.

4. It seems that the reason why here is no mention of preparing hell-fire for the wicked, but only for the devils, is not because, indeed, it was not prepared also for the wicked; but to note that it is the torment which was first prepared for, or assigned to, the devils; thereby showing the greatness of the misery of the wicked, that the devil and his angels must be their companions. Though some think, as is said before, that the reason why wicked men are not mentioned here, is because they are part of the angels of the devil, and so included. And some think it is purposely to manifest God's general love to mankind, that prepared not hell for them, but they cast themselves into the hell prepared for the devils. But the first seems to be the true sense.

And how apparently righteous are the judgments of the Lord ! That those men who would here entertain the devil into their hearts and daily familiarity, should be then entertained by him into his place of torments, and there remain for ever in his society ! Though few entertained him into visible familiarity with their bodies, as witches do, who so make him their familiar, yet all wicked men do entertain him in a more full and constant familiarity with their souls than these witches do with their bodies. How familiar is he in their thoughts, to fill them with vanity, lust, or revenge ! How familiar is he in their hearts, to fill them with covetousness, malice, pride, or the like evils ; and to banish all thoughts of returning to God, and to quench every motion that tendeth to their recovery ! How familiar is he with them, even when they seem to be worshipping God in the public assemblies, stealing the word out of their hearts, filling them with vain and wandering thoughts, blinding their minds that they cannot understand the plainest words which we are able to speak to them, and filling them with a proud rebellion against the direction of their teachers, and an obstinate refusal to be ruled by them, be the matter never so necessary to their own salvation ! How familiar are these evil spirits in their houses, filling them with ignorance, worldliness, and ungodliness, and turning out God's service, so that they do not pray together once in a day, or perhaps at all ! How familiarly doth Satan use their tongues, in cursing, swearing, lying, ribaldry, backbiting, or slandering ; and is it not just with God to make these fiends their familiars

in torment, with whom they entertained such familiarity in sin ! As Christ, with all the blessed angels and saints, will make but one kingdom or family, and shall live all together in perpetual delights; so the devil and all his hellish angels and wicked men shall make but one household, and shall live all together in perpetual misery. O poor sinners ! you are not troubled now at his presence and power in your hearts ; but will you not then be troubled at his presence and tormenting power ? As long as you do not see him, let him do what he will with you, it grieves you little or nothing at all ; but what will you say when you must see him, and abide with him for ever ? Oh ! sirs, his name is easily heard, but his company will be terrible to the stoutest heart alive. He showeth you a smiling face when he tempteth you, but he hath a grimmer face to show you when temptations have conquered you, and torments must succeed. As those who write of witches say he appeareth at first to them in some comely tempting shape, till he have them fast tied to him, and then he beats them, and affrights them, and seldom appears to them but in some ugly hue. Believe it, poor sinners, you do not hear or see the worst of him when you are merry about your sinful pleasures, and rejoicing in your hopes of the commodities or preferments of the world. He hath another kind of voice which you must hear, and another face to show you, that will make you know a little better whom you had to do with ! You would be afraid now to meet him in the dark. What will it be to live with him in everlasting darkness ? Then you will know who it was that you entertained and obeyed, and played with in your sins.

3. And as the text tells us, that it is “ a fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” so it telleth us that it is “ an everlasting fire.” It had a beginning, but it shall have no end. If these wretches would have chosen the service of God, they would have met with no difficulty or trouble, but what would have had a speedy end. Poverty and injuries would have had end ; scorns and abuses would have had an end ; fasting, humiliation, sorrow for sin, watching, and fighting against our spiritual enemies, would all have had an end. But to avoid these, they chose that ease, that pleasure, which hath brought them to that torment which never will have end. I have said so much of these things already in my book called the Saints’ Rest, that I will now say but this much. It is one of the wonders of the world how men who do believe, or think they

do believe, this word of Christ to be true, that “the wicked shall go into everlasting fire,” can yet venture on sin so boldly, and live in it so fearlessly, or sleep quietly till they are out of this unspeakable danger. Only the commonness of it, and the known wickedness of man’s heart, doth make this less wonderful: and were there nothing else to convince us that sinners are mad, and dead as to spiritual things, this were enough, that ever the greatest pleasures or profits of the world, or the most enticing baits which the devil can offer them, should once prevail with them to forget these endless things, and draw them to reject an everlasting glory, and cast themselves desperately into everlasting fire; yea, and all this under daily warnings and instructions, and when it is told them beforehand by the God of truth himself! For the Lord’s sake, sirs, and for your souls’ sakes, if you care not what ministers say, or what such as I say, yet will you soberly read now and then this twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and regard what is told you by him that must be your Judge! and now and then bethink yourselves, soberly, whether these are matters for wise men to make light of; and what it is to be everlastingly in heaven or in hell-fire.

2. We have seen what is the penalty contained in the sentence against the ungodly, the next thing that the text directs us to is the cause or reason of the sentence, verse 42, “For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,” &c. The reason is not given expressly either for their sin against the law of works, that is, because they were sinners, and not perfectly innocent, nor yet from their unbelief, which is the great sin against the law of grace, but it is given from their not expressing their faith and love to Christ in works of mercy and self-denial. And why is this so?

1. We must not suppose that these words of Christ do express the whole judicial process in every point, but the chief parts. It is supposed that all men are convicted of being sinners against the perfect law of the Creator, and that they are guilty of death for that sin, and that there is no way but by Christ to obtain deliverance. But because all this must be acknowledged by the righteous themselves, as well as by the wicked, therefore Christ doth not mention this, but that only which is the turning point or cause in the judgment. For it is not all sinners that shall be finally condemned, but all impenitent, unbelieving sinners, who have rebelled finally against their Redeemer.

2. And the reason why faith itself is not expressed, is,
 1. Because it is clearly implied, and so is love to Christ as Redeemer, in that they should have relieved Christ himself in his members; that is, as it is expressed in Matt. x. 42. They should have received a prophet in the name of a prophet, and a disciple in the name of a disciple; all should be done for Christ's sake, which could not be unless they believed in him, and loved him. 2. Also because that the bare act of believing is not all that Christ requireth to man's final justification and salvation, but holy self-denying obedience must be added, and therefore this is given as the reason of their condemnation, that they did not so obey.

We must observe, also, that Christ here putteth the special for the general; that is, one way of self-denying obedience, and expression of love, instead of such obedience in general. For all men have not ability to relieve those in misery, being perhaps some of them poor themselves; but all have that love and self-denial which will some way express itself, and all have hearts and a disposition to do thus, if they had ability; without such a disposition, none can be saved.

It is the fond conceit of some, that if they have any love to the godly, or wish them well, it is enough to prove them happy. But Christ here purposely lets us know that whoever doth not love him at so high a rate as that he can part with his substance, or any thing in the world, to those uses which he shall require them, even to relieve his servants in want and sufferings for the Master's sake, that man is none of Christ's disciples, nor will be owned by him at the last.

XI. The next point that we come to, is to show you the properties of this sentence at judgment.

When man had broken the law of his Creator at the first, he was liable to the sentence of death, and God presently sat in judgment on him, and sentenced him to some part of the punishment which he had deserved; but upon the interposition of the Son, he before the rest resolved on a way that might tend to his recovery, and death is due yet to every sinner for every sin which he commits, till a pardon do acquit him. But this sentence, which will pass on sinners at the last judgment, doth much differ from that which was passed on the first sin, or which is due according to the law of works alone, for,

1. As to the penalty called the pain of loss, the first judgment

did deprive man of the favour of his Creator, but the second will deprive him of the favour both of the Creator and Redeemer ; the first judgment deprived him of the benefits of innocence ; the second deprives him of the benefits of redemption, the loss of his hopes, and possibility of a pardon, of the spirit of justification and adoption, and of the benefits which conditionally were promised and offered him. These are the punishments of the last judgment, which the law of works did never threaten to the first man, or to any, as it stood alone.

Also the loss of glory as recovered, is the proper penalty of the violated law of grace, which is more than the first loss. As if a man should lose his purse the second time, when another hath once found it for him ; or rather as if a traitor redeemed by another, and having his life and honours offered him if he will thankfully accept it and come in, should by his refusal and obstinacy lose this recovered life which is offered him, which is an addition to his former penalty.

Besides, that the higher degree of glory will be lost, which Christ would bestow on him, more than was lost at first. The very work of the saints in heaven will be to praise and glorify him that redeemed them, and the Father in him, which would not have been the work of man, if he had been innocent.

2. As to the pain of sense, the last judgment by the Redeemer will sentence them to a far sorer punishment than would have befallen them if no Saviour had been offered them. (Heb. x. 29.) The conscience of Adam, if he had not been redeemed, would never have tormented him for rejecting a Redeemer, nor for refusing or abusing his gracious offers and his mercies ; nor for the forfeiting of a recovered happiness ; nor for refusing the easy terms of the gospel, which would have given him Christ and salvation for the accepting ; nor for neglecting any means that tended to recovery ; no, nor for refusing repentance unto life, nor for disobeying a Redeemer that bought him by his blood. As all these are the penalties of the Redeemer's law and judgment, so is it a sorer penalty than conscience would have inflicted merely for not being perfectly innocent, and they will be far sorer gripings and gnawings of the never-dying worm for the abuse of these talents, than if we had never been trusted with any after our first forfeiture. Yea, and God himself will accordingly proportion his punishments. So that you see that privately and positively, or as to their loss and their feeling, the Redeemer will pass on them a heavier doom than the Creator

did, or would have done, according to the first law to perfect man.

Another property of the judgment of Christ is, that it will be final, peremptory, and excluding all further hopes or possibilities of a remedy ; so was not the first judgment of the Creator upon fallen man. Though the law of pure nature knew no remedy, nor gave man any hope of a Redeemer, yet did it not exclude a remedy, nor put in any bar against one, but God was free to recover his creature if he pleased. But in the law of grace he hath resolved that there shall be no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fire which shall devour the adversary, (Heb. x. 26, 27,) and that the fire shall be everlasting, the worm shall not die, and the fire shall not be quenched. (Matt. xxv. ult. ; Matt. xiii. 42, 50 ; John v. 27 ; Matt. v. 26 ; Matt. iii. 12, and Luke iii. 17 ; Mark ix. 43—48.) He that now breaketh that pure law that requireth perfect innocency (as we have all done) may fly to the promise of grace in Christ, and appeal to the law of liberty, or deliverance, to be judged by that, but he that falls under the penalty of that law which should have saved him, as all final unbelievers and impenitent, ungodly persons do, hath no other to appeal to. Christ would have been a sanctuary and refuge to thee from the law of works, hadst thou but come unto him ; but who shall be a refuge to thee from the wrath of Christ ? The gospel would have freed thee from the curse of the law of works if thou hadst but believed and obeyed it, but what shall free thee from the condemnation of the gospel ? Had there no accusation lain against thee, but that thou wast in general a sinner, that is, that thou wast not perfectly innocent, Christ would have answered that charge by his blood. But seeing thou art also guilty of those special sins which he never shed his blood for, who shall deliver thee from that accusation ? When Christ gave himself a ransom for sinners, it was with this resolution, both in the Father and himself, that none should ever be pardoned, justified, or saved by that ransom that did not, in time of this life, sincerely return to God by faith in the Redeemer, and live in sincere obedience to him, and persevering herein. So that he plainly excepted final infidelity, impenitency, and rebellion from pardon ; he never died for the final non-performance of the conditions of the new covenant, so that his judgment for these will be peremptory and remediless. If you say, ‘ Why cannot God find out a remedy for this sin as well as he did for the

first?' I say, God cannot lie. (Tit. i. 2.) He must be true and faithful, as necessarily as he must be God, because of the absolute perfection of his nature, and he hath said and resolved that there shall be no more remedy.

Many other properties of God's judgment general there are, as righteousness, impartiality, inflexibility, and the like; which, because I would not make my discourse too long, I will pass over, contenting myself with the mention of these which are proper to the judgment of the Redeemer, according to his own laws in special.

XII. The twelfth and last thing which I promised to unfold, is the execution of this judgment. Here I should show you both the certainty of the execution, and by whom it will be, and how; but having done all this already in the third part of the aforesaid Book of Rest, I shall now only give this brief touch of it.

No sooner is the dreadful sentence passed, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," but away they must be gone, there is no delay, much less any reprieve to be expected, and yet much less is there any hope of an escape. If the Judge once say, 'Take him, gaoler,' and if Christ say, 'Take him, devils, you that ruled and deceived him, now torment him,' all the world cannot rescue one such soul. It will be in vain to look about for help. Alas! there is none but Christ can help you, and he will not, because you refused his help. Nay, we may say he cannot, not for want of power, but because he is true and just, and therefore will make good that word which you believed not. It is in vain then to cry to hills to fall on you, and the mountains to cover you from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne. It will be then in vain now to repent, and wish you had not slighted your salvation, nor sold it for little pleasure to your flesh. It will be then in vain to cry, 'Lord, Lord, open to us; O spare us; O pity us; O do not cast us into these hideous flames! Do not turn us among devils! Do not torment thy redeemed ones in this fire!' All this will be then too late.

Poor sinner, whoever thou art, that readest or hearest these lines, I beseech thee, in compassion to thy soul, consider how fearful the case of that man will be that is newly doomed to the everlasting fire, and is hauled to the execution without remedy! And what madmen are those that now do no more to prevent such a misery, when they might do it on such easy terms, and now have so fair an opportunity in their hands.

The time was when repentance might have done thee good, but then all thy repentings be in vain. Now, while the day of thy visitation lasteth, hadst thou but a heart to pray and cry for mercy, in faith and fervency through Christ, thou mightest be heard; but then praying and crying will do no good, shouldest thou roar out in the extremity of thy horror and amazement, and beseech the Lord Jesus but to forgive thee one sin, or to send thee on earth once more, and to try thee once again in the flesh, whether thou wouldest not love him, and lead an holy life, it would be all in vain. Shouldest thou beseech him by all the mercifulness of his nature, by all his sufferings and bloody death, by all the merciful promises of his gospel, it would be all in vain. Nay, shouldest thou beg but one day's reprieve, or to stay one hour before thou were cast into those flames, it would not be heard, it would do thee no good. How earnestly did a deceased gentleman (Luke xvi. 24) beg of Abraham for one drop of water from the tip of Lazarus's finger to cool his tongue, because he was tormented in the flame! And what the better was he? He was sent to remember that he had his good things in this life, and that remembrance would torment him more. And do not wonder or think much at this, that Christ will not then be entreated by the ungodly. You shall then have a remember, too, from Christ or conscience. He may soon stop thy mouth, and leave thee speechless, and say, 'Remember, man, that I did one day send thee a message of peace, and thou wouldest not hear it. I once did stoop to beseech thee to return, and thou wouldest not hear. I besought thee by the tender mercies of God, I besought thee by all the love that I had showed thee, by my holy life, by my cursed death, by the riches of my grace, by the offers of my glory, and I could not get thee to forsake the world, to deny the flesh, to leave one beloved sin for all this! I besought thee over and over again, sent many a minister to thee in my name, I waited on thee many a day, and year, and all would not do, thou wouldest not consider, return, and live, and now it is too late. My sentence is past, and cannot be recalled. Away from me, thou worker of iniquity. (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

Ah, sirs, what a case then is the poor desperate sinner left in! How can I write this, or how can you that read or hear it without trembling, once think of the condition that such forlorn wretches will be in! When they look above them, and see the God that hath forsaken them, because they forsook him

first; when they look about them, and see the saints on one hand, whom they despised, now sentenced unto glory, and the wicked on the other hand, whom they accompanied and imitated, now judged with them to everlasting misery; when they look below them, and see the flames that they must abide in, even for evermore, and when the devils begin to hail them to the execution; oh! poor souls, now what would they give for a Christ, for a promise, for a time of repentance, for a sermon of mercy, which once they slept under, or made no account of! How is the case altered now with them! Who would think that these are the same men that made light of all this on earth, that so stoutly scorned the reproofs of the word, that would be worldly, and fleshly, and drunk, and proud, let preachers say what they would, and perhaps hated those that did give them warning. Now they are of another mind, but all too late. Oh, were there any place for resistance, how would they draw back, and lay hold of any thing, before they would be dragged away into those flames! But there is no resisting; Satan's temptations might have been resisted, but his executions cannot; God's judgments might have been prevented by faith and prayer, repentance, and a holy life, but they cannot be resisted when they are not prevented. Glad would the miserable sinner be if he might but turn to nothing, and cease to be, or that he might be any thing rather than a reasonable creature, but these wishes are all in vain. There is one time, and one way of a sinner's deliverance, if he fail in that one, he perisheth for ever; all the world cannot help him after that. "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) Now, he saith, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.) But for the time to come hereafter, hear what he saith. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of

the Lord ; they would none of my counsels ; they despised all my reproofs ; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices ; for the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them, but whoso hearkeneth to me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." I have recited all these words, that you may see and consider whether I have spoke any other thing than God himself hath plainly told you of.

Having said this much of the certainty of the execution, I should next have spoken somewhat of the manner and the instruments, and have showed how God will be for ever the principal cause, and Satan and their own consciences the instruments, in part, and in what manner conscience will do its part, and how impossible it will be to quiet or resist it. But having spoken so much of all this already elsewhere, as is said before, I will forbear here to repeat it, leaving the reader that desireth it there to peruse it.

The uses.—*Use 1.* Beloved hearers, it was not to fill your fancies with news that God sent me hither this day, nor to tell you of matters that nothing concern you, nor by some terrible words to bring you to an hour's amazement, and no more ; but it is to tell you of things that your eyes shall see, and to foretell you of your danger while it may be prevented, that your precious souls may be saved at the last, and you may stand before God with comfort at that day ; but because this will not be every man's case, no, nor the case of most, I must, in the name of Christ, desire you to make, this day, an inquiry into your own souls, and, as in the presence of God, let your hearts make answer to these few questions, which I shall propound and debate with you.

Quest. 1. Do you soundly believe this doctrine which I have preached to you ? What say you, sirs ? Do you believe it as a most certain truth, that you and I, and all the world, must stand at God's bar and be judged to everlasting joy or torment ? I hope you do all, in some sort, believe this : but blame me not if I be jealous whether you soundly believe it, while we see in the world so little of the effect of such a belief. I confess I am forced to think that there is more infidelity than faith among us, when I see more ungodliness than godliness among us ; and I can hardly believe that man that will say or swear that he believeth these things, and yet liveth as carelessly and carnally as an infidel. I know that no man can love to be damned ; yea,

I know that every man that hath a reasonable soul hath naturally some love to himself, and a fear of a danger which he verily apprehendeth; he therefore that liveth without all fear, I must think liveth without all apprehension of his danger. Custom hath taught men to hold these things as the opinion of the country; but if men soundly believed them, surely we should see stronger effects of such a faith, than in the most we do see. Doth the sleepy soul that liveth in security, and followeth this world as eagerly as if he had no greater matters to mind; that never once trembled at the thoughts of this great day, nor once asked his own soul in good sadness, ‘My soul, how dost thou think then to escape?’ I say, doth this man believe that he is going to this judgment? Well, sirs, whether you believe it or not, you will find it true; and believe it you must, before you can be safe. For if you do not believe it, you will never make ready. Let me therefore persuade you in the fear of God to consider that it is a matter of undoubted truth.

1. Consider that it is the express word of the God of truth revealed in Scripture as plainly as you can desire; so that you cannot be unbelieving without denying God’s word, or giving him the lie. (Matt. xiii. 38—50; Matt. xxv. throughout; Rom. ii. 5—10, 16, and i. 32; John v. 28, 29.) “The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” “It is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the judgment.” (Heb. ix. 27.) “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. xiv. 9, 12.) “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.” (Rev. xx. 12.) “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matt. xii. 36, 37.) Many more most express texts of Scripture do put the truth of this judgment out of all question to all that believe the Scripture, and will understand it. There is no place left for a controversy in the point. It is made as sure to us as the word of the living God can make it; and he who will question that, what will he believe? What say you, sirs? Dare you doubt of this, which

the God of heaven hath so positively affirmed? I hope you dare not.

2. Consider it is a master-part of your faith, if you are Christians, and a fundamental article of your creed, that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead : so that you must believe it, or renounce your Christianity, and then you renounce Christ, and all the hopes of mercy that you have in him. It is impossible that you should soundly believe in Christ, and not believe his judgment and life everlasting ; because, as he came to bring life and immortality to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. i. 10,) so it was the end of his incarnation, death, and resurrection, to bring you thither ; and it is part of his honour and office which he purchased with his blood, to be the Lord and Judge of all the world. (Rom. xiv. 9 ; Job v. 22.) If, therefore, you believe not heartily this judgment, deal plainly and openly, and say you are infidels, and cast away the hypocritical visor of Christianity, and let us know you, and take you as you are.

3. Consider that it is a truth which is known by the very light of nature, that there shall be a happiness for the righteous and a misery for the wicked, after this life ; which is evident,

1. In that we have undeniable natural reason for it. 1. God is the righteous governor of the world, and therefore must make a difference among his subjects, according to the nature of their ways ; which we see is not done here, where the wicked prosper and the good are afflicted ; therefore it must be hereafter. 2. We see there is a necessity that God should make promises and threatenings of everlasting happiness or misery for the right governing of the world : for we certainly perceive that no lower things will keep men from destroying all human society and living worse than brute beasts ; and if there be a necessity of making such threats and promises, then there is, certainly, a necessity of fulfilling them ; for God needeth no lie, or means of deceiving, to rule the world.

2. And as we see it by reason, so by certain experience, that this is discernible by the light of nature ; for all the world, or almost all, do believe it. Even those nations where the gospel never came, and have nothing but what they have by nature, even the most barbarous Indians, acknowledge some life after this, and a difference of men according as they are here. Therefore you must believe thus much, or renounce your common reason and humanity, as well as your Christianity. Let me, there-

fore, persuade you all, in the fear of God, to confirm your souls in the belief of this, as if you had heard Christ or an angel from heaven say to you, ‘Oh! man, thou art hasting to judgment.’

Quest. 2. My next question is, ‘Whether you do ever soberly consider of this great day?’ Sirs, do you use, when you are alone, to think with yourselves how certain, and how dreadful it will be; how fast it is coming on; and what you shall do, and what answer you mean to make at that day? Are your minds taken up with these considerations? Tell me, is it so, or not?

Alas, sirs! is this a matter to be forgotten? Is not that man even worse than mad who is going to God’s judgment and never thinks of it? When, if they were to be tried for their lives at the next assize they would think of it, and think again, and cast a hundred times which way to escape. Methinks you should rather forget to go to bed at night, or to eat your meat, or do your work, than forget so great a matter as this.

Truly, I have often, in my serious thoughts, been ready to wonder that men can think of almost any thing else, when they have so great a thing to think of. What! forget that which thou must remember for ever! forget that which should force remembrance, yea, and doth force it with some, whether they will or not. A poor despairing soul cannot forget it: he thinks, whichever way he goes, he is ready to be judged. Oh! therefore, beloved, fix these thoughts as deep in your hearts as thoughts can go. Oh! be like that holy man, who thought that whichever way he went he heard the trumpet sound, and the voice of the angel calling to the world, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.” You have warning of it from God and man to cause you to remember it; do not then forget it. It will be a cold excuse another day, ‘Lord, I forgot this day, or else I might have been ready.’ You dare not, sure, trust to such excuses.

Quest. 3. My next question to you is, ‘How are you affected with the consideration of this day?’ Barely to think of it will not serve. To think of such a day as this with a dull and senseless heart is a sign of fearful stupidity. Did the knees of king Belshazzar knock together with trembling when he saw the hand-writing on the wall? (Dan. v. 6.) How then should thy heart be affected, that seeth the hand-writing of God as a summons to his bar?

When I began to preach of these things long ago, I confess the matters seemed to me so terrible, that I was afraid that people would have run out of their wits with fear; but a little experience showed me, that many are like a dog that is bred up in a forge or furnace, that being used to it, can sleep, though the hammers are beating, and the fire and hot iron flaming about him, when another that had never seen it would be amazed at the sight. When men have heard us seven years together, yea, twenty years, to talk of a day of judgment, and they see it not, nor feel any hurt, they think it is but talk, and begin to make nothing of it. This is their thanks to God for his patience, because his sentence is not executed speedily, therefore their hearts are set in them to do evil, (Eccles. viii. 11,) as if God were slack of his promise, as some men account slackness, (2 Peter iii. 9,) when one day with him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. What, if we tell you twenty years together that you must die, will you not believe us, because you have lived so long, and seen no death coming?

Three or four things there be that should bring any matter to the heart. 1. If it be a matter of exceeding weight. 2. If it concern not others only, but ourselves. 3. If it be certain. 4. If near.

All these things are here to be found, and therefore how should your hearts be moved at the consideration of this great day!

1. What matter can be mentioned with the tongue of man of greater moment? For the poor creature to stand before his Maker and Redeemer, to be judged to everlasting joy or torment? Alas! all the matters of this world are plays, and toys, and dreams to this; matters of profit or disprofit are nothing to it; matters of credit or discredit are unworthy to be named with it; matters of temporal life or death are nothing to it. We see the poor brute beasts go every day to the slaughter, and we make no great matter of it, though their life be as dear to them as ours to us. To be judged to an everlasting death or torment, this is the great danger that one would think should shake the stoutest heart to consider it, and awake the dullest sinner to prevent it.

2. It is a matter which concerneth every one of yourselves, and every man or woman that ever lived upon the earth, or ever shall do. I am not speaking to you of the affairs of some far country that are nothing to you but only to marvel at, which you never saw, nor ever shall do. No; it is thy own self, man or

woman, that hears me this day, that shalt as surely appear before the judgment seat of Christ, as the Lord liveth, and as he is true and faithful: and that is as sure as thou livest on this earth, or as heaven is over thee. That man who heareth all this with the most careless and blockish heart, shall be awakened, and stand with the rest at that day. That man who never thought of it, but spent his time in worldly matters, shall leave all, and there appear: that man that will not believe these things to be true, but maketh a jest of them, shall see and feel what he would not believe, and he also shall be there. The godly that waited in hope for that day, as the day of their full deliverance and coronation, they shall be there; those who have lain in the dust these five thousand years shall rise again, and all stand there. Hearer, whoever thou art, believe it, thou mayest better think to live without meat, to see without light, to escape death, and abide for ever on earth, than to keep away from that appearance. Willing or unwilling, thou shalt be there: and should not a matter, then, which so concerneth thyself, go near to thy heart, and awake thee from thy security?

3. That it is a matter of unquestionable certainty, I have partly showed you already, and more would do if I were preaching to known infidels. If the careless world had any just reason to think it were uncertain, their carelessness were more excusable. Methinks a man should be affected with that which he is certain shall come to pass, in a manner as if it were now in doing. "Ye perfectly know that the day of the Lord so cometh," &c. saith the apostle. (1 Thess. v. 2.)

4. This day is not only certain, but it is near, and therefore should affect you the more. I confess, if it were never so far off, yet seeing it will come at last, it should be carefully regarded; but when the Judge is at the door, (James v. 9,) and we are almost at the bar, and it is so short a time to this assize, what soul that is not dead will be secure?

Alas! sirs, what is a little time when it is gone? How quickly shall you and I be all in another world, and our souls receive their particular judgment, and so wait till the body be raised and judged to the same condition? It is not an hundred years, in all likelihood, till every soul of us shall be in heaven or hell: and it is not like half, or a quarter, of that time, but it will be so with the greater part of us: and what is a year, or two, or an hundred? How speedily is it come! How many a soul that is now in heaven or hell, within a hundred years dwelt in the

places which you now dwell in, and sat in the seats you now sit in? And now their time is past, what is it? Alas! how quickly will it be so with us! You know not, when you go to bed, but you may be judged by the next morning; or, when you rise, but you may be judged before night; but certainly you know that shortly it will be: and should not this, then, be laid to heart? yea, the general judgment will not be long; for, certainly we live in the end of the world.

Quest. 4. My next question is, 'Whether are you ready for this dreadful judgment when it comes, or not?' Seeing it is yourselves which must be tried, I think it concerns you to see that you be prepared. How often hath Christ warned us in the gospel, that we be "always ready," because we know not the day or hour of his coming; (Matt. xxiv. 42, 44, and xxv. 13; 1 Thess. v. 6;) and told us how sad a time it will be to those that are unready. (Matt. xxv. 11, 12.) Did men but well know what a meeting and greeting there will be between Christ and an unready soul, it would sure startle them, and make them look about them. What say you, beloved hearers, are you ready for judgment, or are you not? Methinks a man that knoweth he shall be judged should ask himself the question every day of his life, 'Am I ready to give up my account to God?' Do not you use to ask this of your own hearts? Unless you be careless whether you be saved or damned, methinks you should, and ask it seriously.

Quest. But who are they that are ready? How shall I know whether I be ready or not?

Answ. There is a two-fold readiness: 1. When you are in a safe case. 2. When you are in a comfortable case, in regard of that day. The latter is very desirable, but the first is of absolute necessity. This, therefore, is it that you must principally inquire after.

In general, all those, and only those, are ready for judgment, who shall be justified and saved, and not condemned, when judgment comes—they who have a good cause in a gospel sense. It may be known beforehand who these are; for Christ judgeth, as I told you, by his law. And therefore find out whom it is that the law of grace doth justify or condemn, and you may certainly know whom the Judge will justify or condemn; for he judgeth righteously.

If you further ask me who these are, remember that I told you before, that every man that is personally righteous, by ful-

filling the conditions of salvation in the gospel, shall be saved ; and he that is found unrighteous, as having not fulfilled them, shall perish at that day.

Quest. Who are those ?

Answ. I will tell you them in a few words, lest you should forget, because it is a matter that your salvation or damnation dependeth upon.

1. The soul that unfeignedly repenteth of his former sinful course, and turneth from it in heart and life, and loveth the way of godliness which he hated, and hateth the way of sin which he loved, and is become thoroughly a new creature, being born again, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, shall be justified ; but all others shall certainly be condemned.

Good news to repenting converted sinners ; but sad to impenitent, and him that knows not what this means.

2. That soul that feeling his misery under sin and the power of Satan and the wrath of God, doth believe what Christ hath done and suffered for man's restoration and salvation, and thankfully accepteth him as his only Saviour and Lord, on the terms that he is offered in the Gospel, and to those ends, even to justify him, sanctify, and guide him, and bring him at last to everlasting glory ; that soul shall be justified at judgment ; and he that doth not, shall be condemned.

Or, in short, in Scripture phrase, "He that believeth shall be saved ; and he that believeth not, shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 16.)

3. The soul that hath had so much knowledge of the goodness of God, and his love to man in creation, redemption, and the following mercies ; and hath had so much conviction of the vanity of all creatures, as thereupon to love God more than all things below, so that he hath the chiefest room in the heart, and is preferred before all creatures ordinarily in a time of trial : that soul shall be justified at judgment, and all others shall be condemned.

4. That soul that is so apprehensive of the absolute sovereignty of God, as Creator and Redeemer, and of the righteousness of his law, and the goodness of his holy way, as that he is firmly resolved to obey him before all others ; and doth accordingly give up himself to study his will, purposely that he may obey it, and doth walk in these holy ways, and hath so far mortified the flesh, and subdued the world and the devil, that the authority and word of God can do no more with him than

any other; and doth ordinarily prevail against all the persuasion and interest of the flesh; so that the main scope and bent of the heart and life is still for God; and when he sinneth, he riseth again by true repentance: I say, that soul, and that only, shall be justified in judgment, and be saved.

5. That soul that hath such believing thoughts of the life to come, that he taketh the promised blessedness for his portion, and is resolved to venture all else upon it; and in hope of this glory, doth set light comparatively by all things in this world, and waiteth for it as the end of this life; choosing any suffering that God shall call him to, rather than to lose his hopes of that felicity, and thus persevereth to the end; I say that soul, and none but that, shall be justified in judgment, and escape damnation.

In these five marks I have told you, briefly, who shall be justified and saved, and who shall be condemned, at the day of judgment. And if you would have them all in five words, they are but the description of these five graces—repentance, faith, love, obedience, hope.

But though I have laid these close together for your use; yet, lest you should think, that in so weighty a case, I am too short in the proof of what I so determine of, I will tell you, in the express words of many Scripture texts, who shall be justified, and who shall be condemned. “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3.) “Without holiness none shall see God.” (Heb. xii. 14.) “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) “I send thee to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Acts xxvi. 18.) “Whoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; he that believeth on him, is not condemned: he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God: and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John iii. 15—19.) “The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.” (John v. 28, 29.) “Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of

teeth." (Matt. xxv. 30.) "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.) "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness," &c. (Matt. xxii. 12, 13.) "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20.) "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.) "He is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." (Heb. v. 6.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gate into the city." (Rev. xxii. 14.) "There is then no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 1, 13.) "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. v. 18.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. vi. 21.) Read Psalm i., and many other texts to this purpose, of which some are cited in my Directions for Peace of Conscience. (Dir. xi.)

And thus I have told you from God's word, how you may know whether you are ready for judgment; which is the fourth thing that I would advise you to inquire after.

O sirs! what shift do you make to keep your souls from continual terrors as long as you remain unready for judgment? How do you keep the thoughts of it out of your mind that they do not break your sleep, and meet you in your business, and haunt you every way you go; while judgment is so near, and you are so unready? But I shall proceed to my next question.

Quest. 5. And in the last place, to those of you that are not yet ready, nor in a condition wherein you may be safe at that day, my question is, How are you resolved to prepare for judgment

for the time to come? Will you do no more than you have done hitherto? Or, will you now set yourselves, with all your might, to make preparation for so great a day? Methinks you should be now past all demurs, delays, or further doubtings about such a business; and by the consideration of what I have said already, you should be fully resolved to lose no more time, but presently to awake, and set upon the work. Methinks you should all say, 'We will do any thing the Lord shall direct us to do, rather than we will be unready for this final doom!' Oh! that there were but such hearts in you, that you were truly willing to follow the gracious guidance of the Lord, and to use but those sweet and reasonable means which he hath prescribed you in his word, that you may be ready for that day. Alas! it is no hard matter for me to tell you or myself what it is that we must do, if we will be happy; and it is no very hard matter to do it, so far as we are truly willing; but the difficulty is to be truly and thoroughly willing to this work. If I shall tell you what you must do for preparation, shall I not lose my labour? Will you resolve and promise, in the strength of grace, that you will faithfully and speedily endeavour to practise it, whoever shall gainsay it? Upon hope of this I will set you down some brief directions, which you must follow, if ever you will, with comfort, look the Lord Jesus in the face at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment.

The first direction is this: 'See that your souls be sincerely established in the belief of this judgment and everlasting life:' for if you do not soundly believe it, you will not seriously prepare for it. If you have the judgment and belief of an infidel, you cannot have the heart or the life of a Christian. Unbelief shuts out the most of the world from heaven: see that it do not so by you. If you say you cannot believe what you would, I answer, feed not your unbelief by wilfulness or unreasonableness: use God's means to overcome it, and shut not your eyes against the light, and then try the issue. (Heb. iii. 12—19.)

The second direction: 'Labour diligently to have a sound understanding of the nature of the laws and judgment of God.' On what terms it is that he dealeth with mankind, and on what terms he will judge them to life or death, and what the reward and punishment is. For if you know not the law by which you must be judged, you cannot know how to prepare for the judgment. Study the Scripture, therefore, and mark who they be that God promiseth to save, and who they be that he threat-

eneth to condemn ; for, according to that word, will the judgment pass.

The third direction : ‘ See that you take it as the very business of your lives to make ready for that day.’ Understand that you have no other business in this world but what doth necessarily depend on this. What else have you to do but to provide for everlasting [life,] and to use means to sustain your own bodies and others of purpose for this work, till it be happily done ? Live therefore as men that make this the main scope and care of their lives, and let all things else come in but on the by. Remember every morning, when you awake, that you must spend that day in preparation for your account, and that God doth give it you for that end. When you go to bed, examine your hearts what you have done that day in preparation for your last day, and take that time as lost which doth nothing to this end.’

The fourth direction : ‘ Use frequently to think of the certainty, nearness, and dreadfulness of that day, to keep life in your affections and endeavours, lest by inconsiderateness your souls grow stupid and negligent ;’ otherwise, because it is out of sight, the heart will be apt to grow hardened and secure. And do not think of it slightly, as a common thing, but purposely set yourselves to think of it, that it may rouse you up to such affections and endeavours as in some measure are answerable to the nature of the thing.

The fifth direction : ‘ Labour to have a lively feeling on thy heart of the evil and weight of that sin which thou art guilty of, and of the misery into which it hath brought thee, and would further bring thee if thou be not delivered, and so to feel the need of a deliverer.’ This must prepare thee to partake of Christ now, and if thou partake not of him now, thou canst not be saved by him then. It is these souls that now make light of their sin and misery, that must then feel them so heavy, as to be pressed by them into the infernal flames. And those that now feel little need of a Saviour, they shall then have none to save them when they feel their need.

The sixth direction : ‘ Understand and believe the sufficiency of that ransom and satisfaction to justice which Christ hath made for thy sins, and for the world, and how freely and universally it is offered in the gospel.’ Thy sin is not incurable or unpardonable, nor thy misery remediless : God hath provided a remedy in his Son Christ, and brought it so near thy hands, that

nothing but thy neglecting or wilful refusing it can deprive thee of the benefit. Settle thy soul in this belief.

The seventh direction : ‘ Understand and believe that for all Christ’s satisfaction there is an absolute necessity of sound faith and repentance to be in thy own self before thou canst be a member of him, or be pardoned, adopted, or justified by his blood.’ He died not for final infidelity and impenitency as predominant in any soul. As the law of his Father, which occasioned his suffering, required perfect obedience or suffering, so his own law, which he hath made for the conveyance of his benefits, doth require yet true faith and repentance of men themselves before they shall be pardoned by him, and sincere obedience and perseverance before they shall be glorified.

The eighth direction : ‘ Rest not, therefore, in an unrenewed, unsanctified state, that is, till this faith and repentance be wrought on thy own soul, and thou be truly broken off from thy former sinful course, and from all things in this world, and art dedicated, devoted, and resigned unto God.’ Seeing this change must be made, and these graces must be had, or thou must certainly perish, in the fear of God see that thou give no ease to thy mind till thou art thus changed. Be content with nothing till this be done. Delay not another day. How canst thou live merrily, or sleep quietly in such a condition, as if thou shouldest die in it, thou wouldest perish for ever ? Especially when thou art every hour uncertain whether thou shalt see another hour, and not be presently snatched away by death ? Methinks while thou art in so sad a case, which way ever thou art going, or whatever thou art doing, it should still come into thy thoughts, ‘ Oh ! what if I should die before I be regenerate, and have part in Christ !’

The ninth direction : ‘ Let it be the daily care of thy soul to mortify thy fleshly desires, and overcome this world, and live as in a continual conflict with Satan, which will not be ended till thy life do end.’ If any thing destroy thee by drawing away thy heart from God, it will be thy carnal self, thy fleshly desires, and the allurements of this world, which is the matter that they feed upon. This, therefore, must be the earnest work of life, to subdue this flesh, and set light by this world, and resist the devil, that by these would destroy thee. It is the common case of miserable hypocrites, that at first they list themselves under Christ as for a fight ; but they presently forget their state and

work, and when they are once, in their own conceit, regenerate, they think themselves so safe, that there is no further danger, and thereupon they do lay down their arms, and take that which they miscall their Christian liberty, and indulge and please that flesh which they promised to mortify, and close with the world which they promised to contemn, and so give up themselves to the devil, whom they promised to fight against. If once you apprehend that all your religion lieth in mere believing that all shall go well with you, and that the bitterness of death is past, and in a forbearance of some disgraceful sins, and being much in the exercise of your gifts, and in external ways of duty, and giving God a cheap and plausible obedience in those things only which the flesh can spare, you are then fallen into that deceitful hypocrisy which will as surely condemn you as open profaneness, if you get not out of it. You must live as in a fight, or you cannot overcome. You must live loose from all things in this world, if you will be ready for another. You must not live after the flesh, but mortify it by the Spirit, if you would not die, but live for ever. (Rom. viii. 13.) These things are not indifferent, but of flat necessity.

The tenth direction : ‘Do all your works as men that must be judged for them.’ It is not enough (at least in point of duty and comfort) that you judge this preparation in general to be the main business of your lives, but you should also order your particular actions by these thoughts, and measure them by their respects to this approaching day. Before you venture on them, inquire whether they will bear weight in judgment, and be sweet or bitter when they are brought to trial? Both for matter and manner this must be observed. O that you would remember this when temptations are upon you, when you are tempted to give up your minds to the world, and drown yourselves in earthly cares, will you bethink you soberly whether you would hear of this at judgment; and whether the world will be then as sweet as now; and whether this be the best preparation for your trial. When you are tempted to be drunk, or to spend your precious time in alehouses, or vain unprofitable company, or at cards, or dice, or any sinful or needless sports, bethink you then whether this will be comfortable at the reckoning; and whether time be no more worth to one that is so near eternity, and must make so strict an account of his hours; and whether there be not many better works before you, in which you might spend your time to your greater advantage, and to your greater comfort

when it comes to a review? When you are tempted to wantonness, fornication, or any other fleshly intemperance, bethink you soberly with what face these actions will appear at judgment, and whether they will be then pleasant or unpleasant to you. So when you are tempted to neglect the daily worshipping of God in your families, and the catechising and teaching of your children or servants, especially on the Lord's day, bethink yourselves then what account you will give of this to Christ, when he that entrusted you with the care of your children and servants, shall call you to a reckoning for the performance of that trust.

The like must be remembered in the very manner of our duties. How diligently should a minister study. How earnestly should he persuade. How unweariedly should he bear all oppositions and ungrateful returns; and how carefully should he watch over each particular soul of his charge, (as far as is possible,) when he remembers that he must shortly be accountable for all in judgment? And how importunate should we all be with sinners for their conversion, when we consider that we ourselves also must shortly be judged? Can a man be cold and dead in prayer that hath any true apprehension of that judgment upon his mind, where he must be accountable for all his prayers and performances. Oh! remember, and seriously remember, when you stand before the minister to hear the word, and when you are on your knees to God in prayer, in what a manner that same person, even yourselves, must shortly stand at the bar of the dreadful God! Did these thoughts get thoroughly to men's hearts, they would waken them out of their sleepy devotions, and acquaint them that it is a serious business to be a Christian. How careful should we be of our thoughts and words if we believingly remembered that we must be accountable for them all! How carefully should we consider what we do with our riches, and with all that God giveth us, and how much more largely should we expend it for his service in works of piety and charity, if we believingly remembered that we must be judged according to what we have done, and give account of every talent that we receive! Certainly the believing consideration of judgment might make us all better Christians than we are, and keep our lives in a more innocent and profitable frame.

The eleventh direction: 'As you will certainly renew your failings in this life, so be sure that you daily renew your repent-

ance, and fly daily to Christ for a renewed pardon, that no sin may leave its sting in your souls.' It is not your first pardon that will serve the turn for your latter sins. Not that you must purpose to sin, and purpose to repent when you have done, as a remedy, for that is an hypocritical and wicked purpose of repenting, which is made a means to maintain us in our sins, but sin must be avoided as far as we can, and repentance and faith in the blood of Christ must remedy that which we could not avoid. The righteousness of pardon in Christ's blood is useful to us only so far as we are sinners, and cometh in where our imperfect inherent righteousness doth come short, but must not be purposely chosen before innocency. I mean, we must rather choose, as far as we can, to obey, and be innocent, than to sin and be pardoned, if we were sure of pardon.

The twelfth direction: In this vigilant, obedient, penitent course, with confidence upon God as a father, rest upon the promise of acceptance and remission, through the merits and intercession of him who redeemed you; look up in hope to the glory that is before you, and believe that God will make good his word, and the patient expectation of the righteous shall not be in vain. Cheerfully hold on in the work that you have begun; and as you serve a better master than you did before your change, so serve him with more willingness, gladness, and delight. Do not entertain hard thoughts of him, or of his service, but rejoice in your unspeakable happiness of being admitted into his family and favour through Christ. Do not serve him in drooping dejection and discouragement, but with love, and joy, and filial fear. Keep in the communion of his saints, where he is cheerfully and faithfully praised and honoured, and where is the greatest visible similitude of heaven upon earth, especially in the celebration of the sacrament of Christ's supper, where he seals up a renewed pardon in his blood, and where, unanimously, we keep the remembrance of his death, until he come. Do not cast yourselves out of the communion of the saints, from whom to be cast out by just censure and exclusion is a dreadful emblem, and forerunner of the judgment to come, where the ungodly shall be cast out of the presence of Christ and his saints for ever.

I have now finished the directions, which I tender to you for your preparation for the day of the Lord; and, withal, my whole discourse on this weighty point. What effect all this shall have upon your hearts the Lord knows: it is not in my

power to determine. If you are so far blinded and hardened by sin and Satan, as to make light of all this, or coldly to commend the doctrine, while you go on to the end in your carnal worldly condition as before, I can say no more, but tell thee again that judgment is near, when thou wilt bitterly bewail all this, too late. And among all the rest of the evidence that comes in against thee, this book shall be one which shall testify to thy face, before angels and men, that thou wast told of that day, and intreated to prepare.

But if the Lord shall show thee so much mercy as to open thy eyes, and break in upon thy heart, and, by sober consideration, turn it to himself, and cause thee faithfully to take the warning that hath here been given thee, and to obey these directions, I dare assure thee from the word of the Lord, that this judgment, which will be so dreadful to the ungodly, and the beginning of their endless terror and misery, will be as joyful to thee, and the beginning of thy glory. The Saviour that thou hast believed in, and sincerely obeyed, will not condemn thee. (Psalm i. 5, 6; Rom. viii. 1; John iii. 16.) It is part of his business to justify thee before the world, and to glorify his merits, his kingly power, his holiness, and his rewarding justice, in thy absolution and salvation. He will account it a righteous thing to recompense tribulation to thy troublers, and rest to thyself, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Even then shall he come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day, even because his servants' testimony, and his spirits among them, was believed. (2 Thess. i. 6—10.) That day will be the great marriage of the Lamb, and the reception of thee and all the saints into the glory of thy beloved, to which they had a right at their first consent and contract upon earth: and when the bridegroom comes, thou who art ready shalt go into the marriage, when the door shall be shut against the sleepy, negligent world; and though they cry "Lord, Lord, open to us," they shall be repulsed with a "Verily, I know you not." (Matt. xxv. 10—13.) For this day, which others fear, mayest thou long, and hope, and pray, and wait, and comfort thyself in all troubles with the remembrance of it. (1 Cor. xv. 55—58; 1 Thess.

iv. 17, 18.) If thou were ready to be offered to death for Christ, or when the time of thy departing is at hand, thou mayest look back on the good fight which thou hast fought, and on the course which thou hast finished, and on the faith which thou hast kept, and mayest confidently conclude, that, henceforth there is laid up for thee “a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give thee at that day: and not to thee only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (2 Tim. iv. 6—8.) “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. xxii. 20.)

A

TREATISE OF DEATH,

THE LAST ENEMY TO BE DESTROYED.

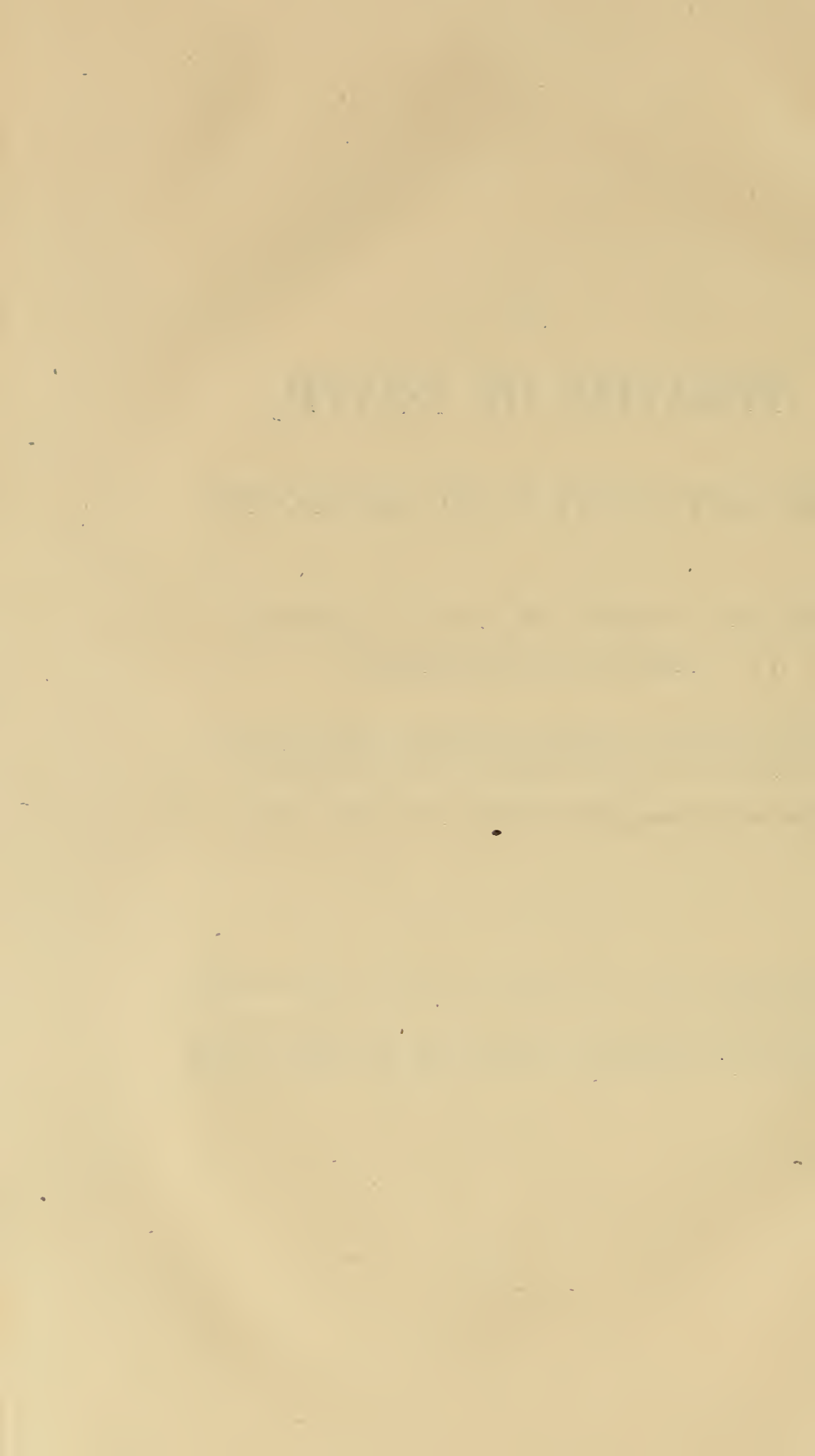
SHOWING WHEREIN ITS ENMITY CONSISTETH,
AND HOW IT IS DESTROYED.

*Part of it was preached at the Funeral of Elizabeth, the late wife of Mr.
Joseph Baker, Pastor of the Church at St. Andrew's in Worcester.*

With some few Passages of the Life of the said Mrs. Baker, observed.

“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned : but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.”—Psalm xv. 4.

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Cor. xv. 55—57.



TO THE WORSHIPFUL
THE
MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND SHERIFF
OF THE
CITY OF WORCESTER;

WITH
THE REST OF THE INHABITANTS; ESPECIALLY THOSE OF
THE PARISHES OF ANDREW'S AND HELEN'S.

WORSHIPFUL, AND THE REST BELOVED,

THE chief part of this following discourse being preached among you, and that upon an occasion which you are obliged to consider, (Isaiah lvii. 1,) being called, to publish it, I thought it meet to direct it first to your hands, and to take this opportunity plainly and seriously to exhort you in some matters that your present and everlasting peace is much concerned in.

Credible fame reporteth you to be a people not all of one mind or temper in the matters of God; but that, 1. some of you are godly, sober, and peaceable; 2. some well-meaning and zealous, but addicted to divisions; 3. some papists; 4. some hidiers, seduced by your late deceased neighbour Clement Writer, (to whom the quakers do approach in many opinions); 5. And too many profane and obstinate persons, that are heartily and seriously of no religion, but take occasion, from the divisions of the rest, to despise or neglect the ordinances of God, and join themselves to no assemblies.

1. To the first sort (having least need of my exhortation) I say no more, but "as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. And beware lest any man spoil you by deceit," &c. (Col. ii. 6—8.) Walk as "a chosen genera-

tion, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; to show forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation; for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." (1 Pet. ii. 9, 12, 15.) Your labour and patience is known to the Lord, and how ye cannot bear them which are evil, but have tried them which say they speak from the Lord, and are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars; even the woman Jezebel, that is suffered to teach and seduce the people, calling herself a prophetess, who shall be cast into a bed of tribulation, and all that commit adultery with her, except they repent; and her children shall be killed with death; and all the churches shall know that Christ is he who searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give to every one according to their work. As for yourselves, we put upon you no other burden but that which you have already; hold fast till the Lord come. (Rev. ii.) Be watchful that ye fall not from your first love. And if any have declined, and grown remiss, remember how you have received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent, and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die, lest your candlestick should be removed." (Rev. iii. 2, 3, &c.) And "beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.) And I beseech you, brethren, "do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, amongst whom you and your brethren shine as lights in the world." (Phil. ii. 14, 15.) And if in well-doing you suffer, think it not strange, but rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, being glorified on your part, while he is evil spoken of on theirs." (1 Pet. iv. 12—14.)

2. To the second sort, inclinable to divisions, let me tender the counsel of the Holy Ghost. "My brethren, be not many masters (or teachers), knowing that ye shall receive the greater

condemnation. The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (Jam. iii. 1, 17, 18.) "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish,—for where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work." (Jam. iii. 13—16.) Look on those assemblies where the people, possessing the fear of God, are of one heart and mind, and walk together in love and holy order, and people give due honour and obedience to their faithful guides, and compare them with the congregations where professors are self-conceited, unruly, proud, and addicted to ostentation of themselves, and to divisions; and see which is likeliest to the primitive pattern, and in which it is that the power of godliness prospereth best, and the beauty of religion most appears, and Christians walk as Christians indeed. If pride had not brought the heavy judgment of infatuation or insensibility on many, the too clear discoveries of the fruits of divisions, in the numerous and sad experiences of this age, would have caused them to be abhorred as odious and destructive, by those that now think they do but transcend their lower brethren in holiness and zeal. "Now I beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10.) "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God." (Rom. xv. 5, 6.) "And I beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) And "mark them that cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." (Rom. xvi. 17.) And "if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye our joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one

accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things (his own gifts and graces), but every man also on the things (the graces and gifts) of others; let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, (or emptied himself of all worldly glory." (Phil. ii. 1—7.) As if he had had no form or comeliness, and no beauty to the eye, for which we should desire him; but was despised and rejected of men, and not esteemed. (Isa. liii. 2—4.) It is not (as you imagine) your extraordinary knowledge, zeal, and holiness, that inclineth you to divisions, and to censuring of your brethren: but it is pride and ignorance, and want of love. And if you grow to any ripeness in knowledge, humility, self-denial, and charity, you will bewail your dividing inclinations and courses, and reckon them among the greater and grievous of your sins, and cry out against them as much as your more charitable and experienced brethren do.

3. To the third sort (the papists) I shall say nothing here, because I cannot expect they should read it and consider it: and because we are so far disagreed in our principles, that we cannot treat with them on those rational terms as we may do with the rest of the inhabitants of the world, whether Christians, infidels, or heathens. As long as they build their faith and salvation on this supposition, that the eyes, and taste, and feeling of all the sound men in the world are deceived, in judging of bread and wine; and as long as they deny the certain experience of true believers, (telling us that we are void of charity and unjustified, because we are not of their church;) and as long as they fly from the judgment and tradition of the ancient and present church, (unless their small part may be taken for the whole, or the major vote;) and as long as they reject our appeal to the holy Scriptures; I know not well what we can say to them, which we can expect they should regard, any more than music is regarded by the deaf, or light by the blind, or argument by the distracted. If they had the moderation and charity impartially to peruse our writings, I durst confidently promise the recovery of multitudes of them, by the three writings which I have already published, and the more that others have said against them.

4. And for the fourth sort (the hidiers and the quakers), I

have said enough to them already in my book against infidelity, and those against popery and quakers; but in vain to those that have sinned unto death.

5. It is the fifth sort, therefore, that I shall chiefly address my speech to, who, I fear, are not the smallest part. It is an astonishing consideration to men that are awake, to observe the unreasonableness and stupidity of the ignorant, careless, sensual part of men, how little they love or fear the God whom their tongues confess; how little they value, or mind, or seek the everlasting glory which they take on them to believe; how little they fear and shun those flames which must feed for ever on the impenitent and unholy; how little they care or labour for their immortal souls, as if they were of the religion of their beasts; how bitterly many of them hate the holy ways commanded by the Lord, while yet they pretend to be themselves his servants, and to take the Scriptures to be his word; how sottishly and contemptuously they neglect and slight the holiness, without which there is no salvation; (Heb. xii. 14;) how eagerly they desire and seek the pleasing of their flesh, and the matters of this transitory life, while they call them vanity and vexation; how madly they will fall out with their own salvation, and, from the errors and sins of hypocrites or others, will pick quarrels against the doctrine, and ordinances, and ways of God; as if other men's faults should be exceeded by you, while you pretend to loathe them. If it be a sin to crack our faith by some particular error, what is it to dash it all to pieces? If it be odious in your eyes to deny some particular ordinance of God, what is it to neglect or profane them all? If it be their sin that quarrel in the way to heaven, and walk not in company, as love requireth them, what is it in you to run towards hell, and turn your backs on the holy laws and ways of God? If it be so lamentable to the nation and themselves, that so many have fallen into schism and disorder, what is it, then, that so many are ungodly, sensual, and worldly, and have no true religion at all in sincerity, and life, and power? Ungodliness is all heresy transcendently in the lump, and that in practice. A man that is so foolish as to plead, that arsenic is better than bread, may yet live himself, if he do not take it; but so cannot he, that eateth it instead of bread. Heretics only in speculation may be saved, but practical heretics cannot. You think it heinous to deny with the mouth, that there is a God, who made us, and is our only Lord and happiness, (and

so it is ;) and is it not heinous, then, to deny him with the heart and life, and to deny him the love and obedience that is properly due to God? It is odious idolatry to bow to a creature as to God; and is it not odious to love, and honour, and obey a creature before him, and to seek it more eagerly, and mind it more seriously than God? If it be damnable infidelity to deny Christ to be the Redeemer, is it much less to turn away from him, and make light of him, and refuse his grace, while you seem to honour him? If it be damnable blasphemy to deny the Holy Ghost, what is it to resist and refuse him when he would sanctify you, and, perhaps, to make a scorn of holiness? If it be heresy to deny the holy catholic church, and the communion of saints, what is it to hate the holy members of the church, and to avoid, if not deride, the communion of saints? Be not deceived; God is not mocked; a mock religion and the name of Christianity will never save you. Do you know how near you are to judgment? and will you fearlessly thus heap up wrath, and lay in fuel for the everlasting flames? Do you know how speedily you shall wish, in the bitterness of your souls, that you had heard, and prayed, and laboured as for your lives, and redeemed your time, and obeyed your teachers? and yet will you now stand loitering, and quarrelling, and jesting and dallying in the matters of salvation? and will you live as if you had nothing but the world to mind, when you are even ready to step into the endless world? O sirs, do you know what you are doing? you are abusing the living God, and wronging the Lord Jesus, and trampling upon that mercy which would comfort you in your extremity, a drop of which you would be glad of: you are grieving your poor friends and teachers, and preparing for your endless grief. Alas! what should a faithful minister do for the saving of your souls? He seeth you befooled in your security, and carelessly passing on towards hell, and cannot help it: he sees you posting to your misery, where you will be out of the reach of all our exhortations, and where mercy will not follow you to be accepted or rejected: and though he see you almost past remedy, he cannot help you. He knoweth not, when he speaks to you, whether ever he shall speak unto you more, and whether ever you shall have another call and offer; and, therefore, he would fain speak effectually if he could; but it is not in his power. He knows that the matter sticks all at your own wills; and that if he could but procure your own consent to the most reasonable and necessary business in the world, the

work were done, and you might escape the everlasting flames ; and yet this is it that he cannot procure. Oh ! wonderful, that any man should be damned ; yea, that many men, and most men, should be damned, when they might be saved if they would, and will not. Yea, that no saying will serve to procure their consent, and make them willing. That we must look on our poor miserable neighbours in hell, and say, ‘ They might have been saved once, but would not : they had time and leave to turn to God, and to be holy and happy as well as others ; but we could never prevail with them to consent, and know the day of their visitation.’ Oh ! what should we do for the saving of careless, senseless souls ? Must we let them go ? Is there no remedy ? Shall ministers study to meet with their necessities, and tell them, with all possible plainness and compassion, of the evil that is a little before them, and teach them how they may escape it ? Why, this they do from day to day, and some will not hear them, but are tippling or idling, or making a jest of the preacher at home ; and others are hearing with prejudice and contempt ; and most are hardened into a senseless deadness ; and all seems to them but an empty sound : and they are so used to hear of heaven and hell, that they make as light of them, as if there were no such states. Alas ! that while millions are weeping and wailing in utter desperation for the neglecting of their day of grace, and turning away from him that called them ; our poor hearers at the same time should wilfully follow them, when they are told from God what others suffer. Alas ! that you should be sleepy and dead under those means that should waken you to prevent eternal death ; and that ever you should make merry so near damnation, and be sporting yourselves with the same kind of sins, that others at the same hour are tormented for. And is such madness as this remediless in people that seem as wise as others for worldly things ? Alas ! for any thing that we can do, experience tells us, that with the most it is remediless. Could we remedy it, our poor people should not wilfully run from Christ, and lie in the flames of hell for ever : could our persuasions and entreaties help it, they should not for ever be shut out of heaven, when it is offered to them as well as others. We bewail it from our hearts before the Lord, that we can entreat them no more earnestly, and beg not of them, as for our lives, to look before them, and hearken to the voice of grace, that they may be saved ; and a thousand times, in secret, we call ourselves hard-hearted, unmerciful, and

unfaithful (in too great a measure) that speak no more importunately for the saving of men's souls, when we know not whether we shall ever speak to them any more. Is this all that we can say or do in so terrible a case, and in a matter of such weight as men's salvation? The Lord forgive our great insensibility, and awaken us, that we may be fit to waken others. But yet for all this, with grief, we most complain, that our people feel not when we feel, and that they are senseless or asleep when we speak to them as seriously as we can; and that tears and moans do not prevail; but they go home and live as stupid, in an unconverted state, as if all were well with them, and they were not the men we speak to.

Oh! that you knew what a fearful judgment it is to be forsaken of God, because you would have none of him, and to be given up to your hearts' lust, to walk in your own counsels, because you would not hearken to his voice; (Psalm lxxxii. 11—13;) and to have God say, 'Let those wretches be ignorant, and careless, and fleshly and worldly, and filthy still. (Rev. xxii. 11.)' Oh! that you knew (but not by experience) what a heavy plague it is to be so forsaken, as to have eyes that see not, or seeing, do not perceive; and to have ears that hear not, or to hear, and not understand; and so to be unconverted and unhealed; (Mark iv. 12;) and to be hardened and condemned by the word, and patience, and mercies, that do soften and save others, and should have saved you. Take heed lest Christ say, 'I have sent them my messenger long enough in vain; from henceforth never fruit grow on them; because they would not be converted, they shall not.' Take heed, lest he take you away from means, and quickly put an end to your opportunities. You see how fast men pass away, but little do you know how many are lamenting that they made no better use of time, and helps, and mercies, while they had them. Oh! hear while you may hear, for it will not be long; read while you may read, and pray while you may pray, and turn while you may turn; and go to your Christian friends and teachers, and inquire of them, what you must do to be saved, before inquiring be too late. Spend the Lord's-day, and what other time you can redeem, in holy preparations for your endless rest, while you have such a happy day to spend, Oh! sleep no longer in your sins, while God stands over you, lest, before you are aware, you awake in hell. Patience and mercy have their appointed time, and will not always wait and be despised. Oh!

let not your teachers be forced to say, ' We would have taught them publicly and privately, but they would not. We would have catechised the ignorant, and exhorted the negligent, but some of them would not come near us, and others of them gave us but the hearing, and went away such as they came.' If once, by forfeiting the gospel, the teachers whom you slight be taken from you, you may then sin on and take your course, till time, and help, and hope, are past.

The Providence that called me to this work was some warning to you. Though it was a removing of his helper, a pattern of meekness, and godliness, and charity, and he is left the more disconsolate in the prosecution of his work. God hath made him faithful to your souls, and careful for your happiness: he walks before you in humility, and self-denial, and patience, and peaceableness, and inoffensive life; he is willing to teach you publicly and privately in season; he manageth the work of God with prudence and moderation, and yet with zeal; carefully avoiding ungodliness and schism, or the countenancing of either of them. Were he not of eminent wisdom and integrity, his name would not be unspotted in a place where dividers and disputers, papists and quakers, and so many bitter enemies of godliness, do watch for matter of accusation and reproach against the faithful ministers of Christ. As you love the safety and happiness of your city, and of your souls, undervalue not such mercies, nor think it enough to put them off with your commendations and good word; it is not that which they live, and preach, and labour for; but for the conversion, edification, and salvation of your souls. Let them have this or they have nothing, if you should give them all you have. The enemies of the Gospel have no wiser cavil against the painful labourers of the Lord, than to call them hirelings, and blame them for looking after tithes, and great matters in the world. But as among all the faithful ministers of this country, through the great mercy of God, these adversaries are now almost ashamed to open their mouths with an accusation of covetousness, so this your reverend, faithful teacher hath stopped the mouth of all such calumny, as to him. When I invited him from a place of less work, and a competent maintenance, to accept of less than half that maintenance, with a far greater burden of work among you, he never stuck at it, as thinking he might be more serviceable to God, and win that which is better than the riches of this world. And if now you will frustrate his

expectations, and disappoint his labours and hopes of your salvation, it will be easier for Sodom in the day of judgment than for you. Alas ! how sad it is to see a faithful minister longing and labouring for men's salvation, and many of them neglect him, and others picking groundless quarrels ; and the proud, unruly, selfish part rebelling, and turning their backs upon their teachers whenever they will not humour them in their own ways, or when they deal but faithfully with their souls ! Some, even of those that speak against disobedience, conventicles, and schism, turn away in disdain, if their children may not be needlessly baptised in private houses, and if that solemn ordinance may not be celebrated in a parlour conventicle. How many refuse to come to the minister in private to be instructed or catechised, or to confer with him about their necessary preparation for death and judgment ! Is not this the case of many among you ? Must not your teachers say he sent to you, and was willing to have done his part, and you refused ? Little will ye now believe how heavy this will lie upon you one day, and how dear you shall pay for the causeless grieving and disappointment of your guides. It is not your surliness and passions that will then serve turn to answer God. Nor shall it save you to say, that ministers were of so many minds and ways that you knew not which of them to regard ; for it was but one way that God in the holy Scripture did prescribe you ; and all faithful ministers were agreed in the things which you reject, and in which you practically differ from them all. What ! are we not all agreed that God is to be preferred before the world ? and that you must first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ? and that no man can be saved except he be converted and born again ? and that he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his ; (Matt. vi. 33 ; John iii. 3, 5 ; Matt. xviii. 3 ; Rom. viii. 9 ;) and that you and your households should serve the Lord ? (Josh. xxiv. 15.) Are we not all agreed that the law of the Lord must be your delight, and that you must meditate in it day and night ? (Psalm i. 2, 3 ;) and that you must be constant and fervent in prayer ? (1 Thess. v. 17 ; Luke xviii. 1, &c. ;) and that all that name the name of Christ must depart from iniquity ; and that if ye live after the flesh ye shall die ? (2 Tim. ii. 19 ; Rom. viii. 13.) You shall find one day that it was you only, and such as you, that practically differed from us in these points ; but we differed not in these, or such as these, among ourselves. I never read that a man shall not see God because

he is episcopal, presbyterian, independent, no, nor anabaptist; or because he readeth not his prayers, or such like; but I read that no man shall see God without holiness. (Heb. xii. 14.)

It will not serve your turn in judgment to say that you were for this side, or that side, and, therefore, you hearkened not to the other side, as long as all those sides agree in the necessity of holiness, which you neglect. Why did you not learn of your own side, at least to forsake your tippling, and swearing, and worldly-mindedness, and to make it the daily trade of your lives to provide for life everlasting, and make sure work in the matter of your salvation? If you had learnt but this much of any side, you would cast away your siding more, and have loved and honoured them that feared the Lord, of what side soever, (Psalm xv. 4,) and have contemned the ungodly as vile persons, though they had been of your side. The Catholic church is one, and containeth all that heartily and practically believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and live a holy, heavenly life. Leave off your siding, and keep this blessed, simple unity, and you will then be wiser than in a passion, to cast yourselves into hell, because some fall out in the way to heaven.

Nor will it serve your turn at the bar of God to talk of the miscarriages or scandals of some that took on them to be godly, no more than to run out of the ark for the sake of Ham, or out of Christ's family for the sake of Judas. Whatever men are, God is just, and will do you no wrong; and you are called to believe in God, and to serve him, and not to believe in men. Nothing but wickedness could so far blind men as to make them think they may cast off their love and service to the Lord, because some others have dishonoured him; or that they may cast away their souls by carelessness, because some others have wounded their souls by particular sins. Do you dislike the sins of professors of godliness? So much the better. We desire you not to agree with them in sinning. Join with them in a holy life, and imitate them so far as they obey the Lord; and go as far beyond them in avoiding the sins that you are offended at as you can; and this it is that we desire. Suppose they were covetous, or liars, or schismatical, imitate them in holy duties, and fly as far from covetousness, lying, and schism, as you will.

You have had learned and godly bishops of this city; search

the writings of those of them that have left any of their labours to posterity, and see whether they speak for the same substantial of faith and godliness, which are now preached to you by those that you set so light by. Bishops Latimer, Parrey, Babington, &c., while they were bishops; and Robert Abbot, Hall, &c., before they were bishops, all excellent, learned, godly men, have here been preachers to your ancestors. Read their books, and you will find that they call men to that strictness and holiness of life which you cannot abide. Read your Bishop Babington on the Commandments, and see there how zealously he condemneth the profaners of the Lord's-day, and those that make it a day of idleness or sports. And what if one man think that one bishop should have hundreds of churches under his sole jurisdiction, and another man think that every full parish-church should have a bishop of their own, and that one parish will find him work enough, be he what he will (which is the difference now amongst us,) is this so heinous a disagreement as should frighten you from a holy life, which all agree for?

To conclude, remember, this is the day of your salvation. Ministers are your helpers; Christ and holiness are your way; Scripture is your rule; the godly must be your company; and the communion of saints your desire. If now any scandals, divisions, displeasures, or any seducements of secret or open adversaries of the truth, or temptations of Satan, the world, or flesh whatsoever, shall prevail with you to lose your day, to refuse your mercies, and to neglect Christ and your immortal souls, you are conquered and undone, and your enemy hath his will; and the more confidently and fearlessly you brave it out, the more is your misery, for the harder are your hearts, and the harder is your cure, and the surer and sorer will be your damnation. I have purposely avoided the enticing words of worldly wisdom, and a style that tends to claw your ears, and gain applause with airy wits, and have chosen these familiar words, and deal thus plainly and freely with you, because the greatness of the cause persuaded me I could not be too serious. Whether many of you will read it, and what success it shall have upon them, or how those that read it will take it, I cannot tell; but I know that I intended it for your good; and that whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, the ministers of Christ must not forbear to do their

duty, nor be rebellious themselves ; but our labours shall be acceptable with our Lord, and you shall know that his ministers were among you. (Ezek. ii. 3—8.) “Yet a little while is the light with you : walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you ; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.” (John xii. 35.) Oh, take this warning from Christ, and from

An earnest desirer of your everlasting peace,

RICHARD BAXTER.

A

TREATISE OF DEATH,

THE

LAST ENEMY TO BE DESTROYED.

1 CORINTHIANS xv. 26.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

DEATH is the occasion of this day's meeting; and death must be the subject of our present meditations. I must speak of that which will shortly silence me, and you must hear of that which will speedily stop your ears: and we must spend this hour on that which waits to cut our thread, and take down our glass, and end our time, and tell us we have spent our last. But as it hath now done good by doing hurt, so we are to consider of the accidental benefits, as well as of the natural evil, from which the heavenly wisdom doth extract them. Death hath now bereaved a body of its soul, but thereby it hath sent that soul to Christ, where it hath now experience how good it is to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.) It hath separated a faithful wife from a beloved husband; but it hath sent her to a husband more dearly beloved, and taught her now, by experience, to say, that to be with Christ is best of all. (Phil. i. 23.) It hath deprived a sorrowful husband of a wife, and deprived us of a faithful friend: but it hath thereby brought us to the house of mourning, which is better for us than the house of feasting; (a paradox to the flesh, but an undoubted truth;) for here we may see the end of all men, and we who are yet living may lay it to our hearts. (Eccles. vii. 2, 3.) Yea, it hath brought us to the house of God, and occasioned this serious address to his holiness, that we may be instructed by his word, as we are warned by his works; and that we may be wise to understand, and to consider our latter end. (Deut. xxxii. 29.)

It is like you will think, to tell men of the evil or enmity of death is as needless a discourse as any could be chosen ; for who is there that is not naturally too sensible of this, and who doth not dread the name, or, at least, the face of death ? But there is accidentally a greater evil in it than that which nature teacheth men to fear : and while it is the king of terrors to the world, the most are ignorant of the greatest hurt that it doth them, or can do them ; or, at least, it is but little thought on ; which hath made me think it a needful work to tell you yet of much more evil in that which you abhor as the greatest evil : but so as withal to magnify our Redeemer, who overshooteth death in its own bow ; and causeth it, when it aims at the mark, to miss it ; and which causeth health by loathsome medicines ; and, by the dung of our bodily corruption, manureth his church to the greater felicity.

Such excellent skill of our wise physician we find expressed and exercised in this chapter, where an unhappy error against the resurrection hath happily occasioned an excellent discourse on that weighty subject, which may establish many a thousand souls, and serve to shame and destroy such heresies, till the resurrection come and prove itself. The great argument which the apostle most insisteth on to prove the resurrection, is Christ's own resurrection, where he entereth into a comparison between Christ and Adam ; showing that, as Adam first brought death upon himself, and then upon his posterity, so Christ, who was "made a quickening Spirit," did first rise himself as the first-fruits, and then at his coming will raise his own ; and "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." And this Christ will do as our victorious king, and the captain of our salvation, who, when he hath subdued every enemy, will then deliver up the kingdom to the Father ; and the last enemy which he will subdue is death, and therefore our resurrection is his final conquest.

The terms of the text have no difficulty in them. The doctrine which they express must be thus unfolded :

I. I must show you that death is an enemy, and what is meant by this expression, and wherein its enmity doth consist.

II. I shall show you that it is an enemy to be destroyed, though last, and how, and by what degrees it is destroyed. And then we shall make application of it to your further instruction and edification.

I. That you may know what is meant by an enemy here, you

must observe that man, being fallen into sin and misery, and Christ having undertaken the work of our redemption, the Scripture oft speaketh of our misery and recovery metaphorically in military terms : and so Satan is said to take us captive, and we to be his slaves, and Christ to be the captain of our salvation, and to redeem us from our bondage ; and thus our sin and misery, and all that hindereth the blessed ends of his undertaking, are called enemies. Death, therefore, is called an enemy to be destroyed, that is, a penal evil to be removed by the Redeemer, in order to our recovery, and the glory of his grace. 1. It is an evil. 2. A punishment procured by our sin, and executed by God's justice. 3. It is an evil that hindereth our felicity. These three things are included in the enmity.

That death is an enemy to nature is a thing that all understand : but all consider not how it is an enemy to our souls, to the exercise of grace, and, consequently, to the attainment of glory. I shall, therefore, having first spoken briefly of the former, insist a little longer upon the latter.

1. How great an enemy death is unto nature doth easily appear, in that, 1. It is the dissolution of the man. It maketh a man to become no man, by separating the soul from the body, and dissolving the body into its principles. It pulls down in a moment a curious frame that nature was long building and tenderly cherishing and preserving. The mother long nourisheth it in her bowels, and painfully brings it forth, and carefully brings it up. What labour doth it cost our parents and ourselves to make provision for this life, and death in a moment cuts it off. How careful are we to keep in these lamps, and to maintain the oil, and death extinguisheth them at a blast. How noble a creature doth it destroy ! To-day our parts are all in order, and busy about their several tasks ; our hearts are moving, our lungs are breathing, our stomachs are digesting, our blood and spirits by assimilation making more ; and to-morrow death takes off the poise, and all stands still, or draws the pins, and all the frame doth fall to pieces. We shall breathe no more, nor speak, nor think, nor walk no more : our pulse will beat no more ; our eyes shall see the light no more ; our ears shall hear the voice of man, delightful sounds, and melody, no more ; we shall taste no more our meat or drink ; our appetite is gone ; our strength is gone ; our natural warmth is turned into an

earthly cold; our comeliness and beauty is turned into a ghastly, loathsome deformity; our white and red doth soon turn into horrid blackness; our tender flesh hath lost its feeling, and is become a senseless lump which feeleth not whither it is carried, nor how it is used; that must be hidden in the earth, lest it annoy the living, that turns to loathsome putrefaction, and after that to common earth. Were all the once comely bodies which are now rotting in one churchyard uncovered, and here presented to your view, the sight would tell you, more effectually than my words do, what an enemy death is to our nature. When corruption hath finished its work, you see the earth which once was flesh; you see the bones; you see the skulls; you see the holes where once were brains, and eyes, and mouth. This change death makes, and that universally and unavoidably. The prince cannot resist it by his majesty, for he hath sinned against the highest Majesty; the strong cannot resist it by their strength, for it is the messenger of the Almighty. The commanders must obey it; the conquerors must be conquered by it. The rich cannot bribe it; the learned orator cannot persuade it to pass him by; the skilful physician cannot save himself from the mortal stroke. Neither fields, nor gardens, earth, or sea, affordeth any medicine to prevent it. All have sinned, and all must die; "Dust we are, and to dust we must return:" (Gen. iii. 19:) and thus should we remain if the Lord of life should not revive us.

2. And it is not only to the body, but to the soul also, that death is naturally an enemy. The soul hath naturally a love and inclination to its body, and therefore it feareth a separation before, and desireth a restoration afterward. Abstracting joy and torment, heaven and hell, in our consideration, the state of separation as such is a natural evil: even to the human soul of Christ it was so, while his body remained in the grave. Which separated state is the *hades*, which our English calleth hell, that Christ is said to have gone into. And though (the soul of Christ, and) the souls of those that die in him, do pass into a far more happy state than they had in the flesh, yet that is accidentally, from rewarding justice and the bounty of the Lord, and not at all from death as death. The separation as such is still an evil; and therefore the soul is still desirous of the body's resurrection, and knoweth that its felicity will then be greater, when the reunion and glorification hath perfected the whole man: so that

death as death is unwelcome to the soul itself, though death, as accidentally gainful, may be desired.

3. And to the unpardoned, unrenewed soul, death is the passage to everlasting misery, and in this regard is far more terrible than in all that hitherto hath been spoken. Oh! could the guilty soul be sure that there is no justice to take hold on it after death, and no more pain and sorrow to be felt, but that man died as a beast which hath no more to feel, or lose, then death would seem a tolerable evil; but it is the living death, the dying life, the endless wo, to which death leads the guilty soul, which makes it to be unspeakably terrible. The utter darkness, the unquenchable fire, the worm that dieth not, the everlasting flames of the wrath of God; these are the chief horror and sting of death to the ungodly. Oh! were it but to be turned into trees, or stones, or earth, or nothing, it were nothing, in comparison of this. But I pass by this, because it is not directly intended in my text.

4. The saints themselves being sanctified but in part, are but imperfectly assured of their salvation; and therefore, in that measure, as they remain in doubt, or unassured, death may be a double terror to them. They believe the threatenings, and know more than unbelievers do, what an insufferable loss it is to be deprived of the celestial glory; and what an unspeakable misery it is to bear the endless wrath of God: and therefore, so far as they have such fears, it must needs make death a terror to them.

5. But if there were nothing but death itself to be our enemy, the foreknowledge of it would increase the misery. A beast that knoweth not that he must die, is not tormented with the fears of death, though nature hath possessed them with a self-preserving fear, for the avoiding of an invading evil: but man foreknoweth that he must die; he hath still occasion to anticipate his terrors. That which will be, and certainly and shortly will be, is, in a manner, as if it were already: and, therefore, foreknowledge makes us as if we were always dying. We see our graves, our weeping friends, our fore-described corruption and dismal state, and so our life is a continual death. And thus death is an enemy to nature.

2. But this is not all, nor the greatest enmity that death hath to the godly. It is a lamentable hinderance to the work of grace, as I shall show you next in ten particulars.

1. The fears of death do much abate our desires after

God, as he is to be enjoyed by the separated soul. Though every believing, holy soul do love God above all, and take heaven for his home, and therefore sincerely longeth after it, yet when we know that death stands in the way, and that there is no coming thither but through this dreadful, narrow passage, this stoppeth, and lamentably dulleth our desires; and so the natural enmity turneth to a spiritual sorer enmity. For let a man be never so much a saint, he will still be a man, and therefore, as death will still be death, so nature will still be nature, and therefore, death, as death, will be abhorred. And we are such timorous sluggards, that we are easily discouraged by this lion in the way. The ugly porter affrighted us from those grateful thoughts of the New Jerusalem, the city of God, the heavenly inheritance, which otherwise the blessed object would produce. Our sanctified affections would be mounting upwards, and holy love would be working towards its blessed object, but death, standing in the way, suppresseth our desires, and turns us back, and frighteneth us from our Father's presence. We look up to Christ and the holy city as to a precious pearl in the bottom of the sea, or as to some dear and faithful friend, that is beyond some dreadful gulf. Fain would we enjoy him, but we dare not venture; we fear this dismal enemy in the way. He that can recover his health by a pleasant medicine, doth take it without any great reluctancy, but if a leg or an arm must be cut off, or a stone cut out by a painful, dangerous incision, what a striving doth it cause between the contrary passions? The love of life, and the love of ease, the fear of death, and the fear of suffering.

Could we but come to heaven as easily as innocent Adam might have done if he had conquered, what wings would it add to our desires! Might we be translated as Enoch, or conveyed thither in the chariot of Elias, what saint is there that would not long to see the face and glory of the Lord? Were it but to go to the top of a mountain, and there see Christ with Moses and Elias, in a glimpse of glory, as did the three disciples, who would not make haste, and say, "It is good for us to be here?" (Matt. xvii. 1—4.) But to travel so cheerfully with Abraham to the mount of Moriah, to sacrifice an only son, or with a martyr to the flames, is a harder task. This is the principal enmity of death; it deterreth our desires and thoughts from heaven, and maketh it a far harder matter to us to long after God than otherwise it would be. Yea, it causeth us to

fly from him, even when we truly love him, and where faith and love do work so strongly as to overcome these fears, yet do they meet with them as an enemy, and must fight before they overcome.

2. And as this enemy dulleth our desires, so doth it consequently cool our love, as to the exercise, and it hindereth our hope, and much abateth the complacency and joy that we should have in the believing thoughts of heaven, when we should be rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; (Rom. v. 2½;) the face of death appearing to our thoughts, is naturally an enemy to our joy. When we think of the grave, and of dissolution, and corruption, and of our long abode in the places of darkness, of our contemned dust, and scattered bones, this damps our joyful thoughts of heaven, if supernatural grace do not make us conquerors.

But if we might pass from earth to heaven, as from one room to another, what haste should we make in our desires! How joyfully should we think and speak of heaven! Then we might live in the joy of the Holy Ghost, and easily delight ourselves in God, and comfort would be our daily food.

3. Moreover, as our natural enemy doth thus occasion the abatement of desire, and love, and joy, so also of our thankfulness for the glory that is promised us. God would have more praise from us, if we had more pleasing, joyful thoughts of our inheritance. We should magnify him from day to day, when we remember how we shall magnify him for ever. Our hearts would be turned into thankfulness, and our tongues would be extolling our dear Redeemer, and sounding forth his praise whom we must praise for ever, if dreadful death did not draw a veil to hide the heavenly glory from us.

4. And thus the dismal face of death doth hinder the heavenliness of our conversation. Our thoughts will be diverted when our complacency and desire is abated; our minds be willing to grow strange to heaven, when death still mingleth terror in our meditations. Whereas if we could have come to God in the way that was first appointed us, and could be clothed with glory, without being stripped of our present clothing by this terrible hand, how familiarly should we then converse above! How readily would our thoughts run out to Christ! Meditation of that glory would not be then so hard a work; our hearts would not be so backward to it as now they are.

5. Faith is much hindered, and infidelity much advantaged,

by death. Look either to the state of soul or body, and you will easily perceive the truth of this. The state of a soul incorporated we know by long experience. What kind of apprehensions, volitions, and affections belong to a soul while it acteth in the body, we feel or understand, but what manner of knowledge, will, or love, what joy, what sorrow, belong to souls that are separated from the bodies, it is not possible for us now distinctly and formally to conceive. And when men find themselves at a loss about the manner, they are tempted to doubt of the thing itself. The swarms of irreligious infidels that have denied the immortality and separated existence of the soul, are too full a proof of this, and good men have been haunted with this horrible temptation. Had there been no death, we had not been liable to this dangerous assault. The opinion of the sleeping of the soul till the resurrection is but a step to flat infidelity, and both of them hence receive their life, because a soul in flesh, when it cannot conceive to its satisfaction of the being, state, or action of a separated soul, is the easier drawn to question or deny it.

And in regard of the body, the difficulty and trial is as great. That a corpse resolved into dust, and perhaps first devoured by some other body, and turned into its substance, should be reunited to its soul, and so become a glorified body, is a point not easy for unsanctified nature to believe. When Paul preached of the resurrection to the learned Athenians, some mocked, and others turned off that discourse. (Acts xvii. 32.) It is no easier to believe the resurrection of the body, than the immortality or separated existence of the soul. Most of the world, even heathens and infidels, do confess the latter, but few of them comparatively believe the former. And if sin had not let in death upon our nature, this perilous difficulty had been prevented. Then we should not have been puzzled with the thoughts of either a corrupted body, or a separated soul.

6. And consequently, by all this already mentioned, our endeavours meet with a great impediment. If death weaken faith, desire, and hope, it must needs dull our endeavours. The deterred, discouraged soul moves slowly in the way of life, whereas, if death were not in our way, how cheerfully should we run towards heaven! Our thoughts of it would be still sweet, and these would be a powerful spring to action. When the will goes with full sails, the commanded faculty will the more easily follow. We should long so earnestly to be in heaven, if

death were not in the way, that nothing could easily stop us in our course. How earnestly should we pray! How seriously should we meditate and confer of heaven, and part with any thing to attain it. But that which dulls our desires of the end, must needs be an enemy to holy diligence, and dull us in the use of means.

7. This enemy also doth dangerously tempt us to fall in love with present things, and to take up the miserable portion of the worldling. When it hath weakened faith, and cooled our desires to the life to come, we shall be tempted to think that it is best to take such pleasure as may here be had, and feed on that where a sensual mind hath less discouragement. Whereas, if death did not stand in the way, and darken heaven to us, and turn back our desires, how easily should we get above these trifles, and perceive the vanity of all below, and how unworthy they are to be once regarded.

8. Moreover, it is much along of this last enemy that God is so dishonoured by the fears and droopings of believers. They are but imperfectly yet freed from this bondage, and accordingly they walk. Whereas, if the king of terrors were removed, we should have less of fear, and more of love, as living more in the sight and sense of love. And then we should glorify the God of love, and appear to the world as men of another world, and show them the faith and hope of saints in the heavenly cheerfulness of our lives, and no more dishonour the Lord and our profession by our uncomfortable despondencies, as we do.

9. Moreover, it is much along of this last enemy that many true Christians cannot perceive their own sincerity, but are overwhelmed with doubts and troublesome fears, lest they have not the faith and hope of saints, and lest the love of God abide not in them, and lest their hearts are more on earth than heaven. When they find themselves afraid of dying, and to have dark, amazing thoughts about eternity, and to think with less trouble and fear of earth than of the life to come, this makes them think that they are yet but worldlings, and have not placed their happiness with God, when perhaps it is but the fear of death that causeth these unjust conclusions. Christian, I shall tell thee more anon, that God may be truly loved and desired by thee, and heaven may be much more valued than earth, and yet the natural fears of death that standeth in thy way may much perplex thee, and make thee think that thou art averse

from God, when indeed thou art but averse from death, because yet this enemy is not overcome.

10. Lastly, this enemy is not the smallest cause of many of our particular sins, and of the apostasy of many hypocrites. Indeed it is one of the strongest of our temptations. Before man sinned, none could take away his life but God, and God would not have done it for any thing but sin. So that man had no temptations from the malice of enemies, or the pride of conquerors, or the fury of the passionate, or the power of tyrants, to be afraid of death, and to use any unlawful means to escape it. An avoidable death from the hand of God he was obliged moderately to fear, that is, to be afraid of sinning lest he die, else God would not have threatened him, if he would not have had him make use of a preventing fear. But now we have an unavoidable death to fear, and also an untimely death from the hand of man by God's permission. And the fear of these is a powerful temptation, otherwise Abraham would not have distrustively equivocated as he did to save his life, (Gen. xx. 11,) and Isaac after him do the same, when he sojourned in the same place. (Gen. xxvi. 7.) If the fear of death were not a strong temptation, Peter would not have thrice denied Christ, and that after so late a warning and engagement. Nor would all his disciples have forsaken him and fled. (Matt. xxvi. 56.) Nor would martyrs have a special reward, nor would Christ have been put to call upon his disciples, that they fear not them that can kill the body, (Luke xii. 4,) and to declare to men the necessity of self-denial in this point of life, and that none can be his disciple that loves his life before him. (Matt. xvi. 25 ; Luke xiv. 26.) He is a Christian indeed that so loveth God that he will not sin to save his life. But what is it that an hypocrite will not do to escape death? He will equivocate and forswear himself with the jesuit and familist; he will forsake not only his dearest friend, but Christ also and his conscience. What a multitude of the most heinous sins are daily committed through the fears of death. Thousands where the inquisition ruleth are kept in popery by it, and thousands are kept in mahometanism by it. Thousands are drawn by it to betray their countries; to deny the truth; to betray the church and cause of Christ, and, finally, to betray their souls unto perdition. Some of them presume to deny Christ wilfully, because that Peter had pardon that denied him through surprise, and through in-

firmity, but they will not repent with Peter, and die for him after their repentance. He that hath the power of an hypocrite's life, may prescribe him what he shall believe and do; may write him down the rule of his religion, and tell him what changes he shall make, what oaths he shall take, what party he shall side with, and command him so many sins a day as you make your horse go so many miles. Satan, no doubt, had much experience of the power of this temptation when he boasted so confidently of it against Job, (ii. 4,) "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." And it is true, no doubt, of those that love nothing better than their lives. Satan thought that the fear of death would make a man do any thing, and of too many he may boldly make this boast, 'Let me but have power of their lives, and I will make them say any thing, and swear any thing, and be for any cause or party, and do any thing against God or man.' When lesser matters can do so much, as common, sad experience sheweth us, no wonder if the fear of death can do it.

3. In brief, you may see by what is said that death is become an enemy to our souls, by being first the enemy of our natures. The interest of our bodies works much on our souls, much more the interest of the whole man. The principle of self-love was planted in nature in order to self-preservation, and the government of the world. Nature doth necessarily abhor its own destruction. And therefore this destruction standing in the way, is become an exceeding great hinderance to our affections, which takes them off from the life to come.

1. It is a very great hinderance to the conversion of those that are yet carnal, imprisoned in their unbelief. It is hard to win their hearts to such a state of happiness that cannot be obtained but by yielding unto death.

2. And to the truly godly it is naturally an impediment, and a great temptation in the points before expressed. And though it prevail not against them, it exceedingly hindereth them. And thus I have showed you that death is an enemy, further than, I doubt, the most consider of.

If the unbeliever shall here tell me that death is not the fruit of sin, but natural to man, though he had never sinned, and therefore that I lay all this on God, I answer him, that mortality, as it signifieth a *posse mori*, a natural capacity of dying, was natural to us in our innocency, or else death could not be threatened as a penalty. And if I grant as much of a natural dispo-

sition in the body to a dissolution, if not prevented by a glorifying change, it will no whit advantage their impious cause. But withal, man was then so far immortal, as that he had a *posse non mori*, a natural capacity of not dying, and the *mori-etur vel non morietur*, the actual event of life or death, was laid by the Lord of life and death upon his obedience or disobedience. And man having sinned, justice must be done, and so we came under a *non posse non mori*, an impossibility of escaping death, (ordinarily,) because of the peremptory sentence of our Judge. But the day of our deliverance is at hand, when we shall attain a *non posse mori*, a certain consummate immortality, when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed, and how that is done, I shall next inquire.

You have seen the ugly face of death; you are next to see a little of the love of our great Redeemer. You have heard what sin hath done; you are next to hear what grace hath done, and what it will do. You have seen the strength of the enemy; you are now to take notice of the victory of the Redeemer, and see how he conquereth all this strength.

1. The beginning of the conquest is in this world. 2. The perfection will not be till the day of resurrection, when this last enemy shall be destroyed.

1. Meritoriously death is conquered by death. The death of sinners by the Mediator's death. Not that he intended in his meritorious work to save us from the stroke of death by a prevention, but to deliver us from it after by a resurrection. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 21.) "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) Satan, as God's executioner, and as the prosperous tempter, is said to have had the power of death. The fears of this dreadful executioner are a continual bondage, which we are liable to, through all our lives, till we perceive the deliverance which the death of the Lord of life hath purchased us. 1st. By death, Christ hath satisfied the justice that was armed by sin against us. 2nd. By death he hath showed us, that death is a tolerable evil, and to be yielded to in hope of following life.

2. Actually he conquered death by his resurrection. This

was the day of grace's triumph : this day he showed to heaven, to hell, and to earth, that death was conquerable ; yea, that this personal death was actually overcome. The blessed souls beheld it to their joy, beholding in the resurrection of their Head, a virtual resurrection of their own bodies. The devils saw it, and therefore saw that they had no hopes of holding the bodies of the saints in the power of the grave. The damned souls were acquainted with it, and therefore knew that their sinful bodies must be restored to bear their part in suffering. The believing saints on earth perceive it, and therefore see that their bonds are broken, and that to the righteous there is hope in death ; and that our head being actually risen, assureth us that we shall also rise. " For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him : " (1 Thess. iv. 14 :) and as " Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him ; " (Rom. vi. 9 ;) so shall we rise and die no more. This was the beginning of the church's triumph. " This is the day that the Lord hath made, (even the day which the church on earth must celebrate with joy and praise, till the day of our resurrection;) we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm cxviii. 24.) The resurrection of our Lord hath, 1st, assured us of the consummation of his satisfaction ; 2d, of the truth of all his word, and so of his promises of our resurrection ; 3d, that death is actually conquered, and a resurrection possible ; 4th, that believers shall certainly rise when their head and Saviour is risen to prepare them an everlasting kingdom, and to assure them that thus he will raise them at the last. A bare promise would not have been so strong a help to faith, as to the actual rising of Christ, as a pledge of the performance. " But now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept : " (1 Cor. xv. 20 :) " for because he liveth, we shall live also." (John xiv. 19.)

3. The next degree of destruction to this enemy was by the gift of his justifying and sanctifying grace. Four special benefits were then bestowed on us, which are antidotes against the enmity of death. 1. One is the gift of saving faith, by which we look beyond the grave, as far as to eternity. And this doth most powerfully disable death to terrify and discourage us, and raiseth us above our natural fears, and showeth us (though but in a glass) the exceeding eternal weight of glory which churlish death shall help us to. So that when the

eye of the unbeliever looketh no further than the grave, believing souls can enter into heaven and see their glorified Lord, and thence fetch love, and hope, and joy, notwithstanding the terrors of interposing death. The eye of faith foreseeeth the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, and causeth us therein greatly to rejoice, though now for a season, (if need be,) we are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” (1 Peter i. 5, 6.) And so victorious is this faith against all the storms that do assault us, “That the trial of it, though with fire, doth but discover that it is much more precious than gold that perisheth, and it shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having never seen in the flesh, we love; and though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice with unspeakable glorious joy; and shall shortly receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.” (1 Peter i. 7—9.) Thus faith, though it destroy not death itself, destroyeth the malignity and enmity of death; while it seeth the things that are beyond it, and the time when death shall be destroyed, and the life where death shall be no more. Faith is like David’s three mighty men that brake through the host of the Philistines to fetch him the waters of Bethlehem, for which he longed. (2 Sam. xxiii. 15, 16.) When the thirsty soul saith, ‘Oh, that one would give me drink of the waters of salvation!’ faith breaks through death which standeth in the way, and fetcheth these living waters to the soul. We may say of death as it is said of the world: “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith: who is he that overcometh the world; but he that believeth?” &c. (1 John v. 4, 5.) “For greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (1 John iv. 4.) The believing soul, foreseeing the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory, may sing beforehand, the triumphing song, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.) “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction (though it reach to death) which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, (and therefore not worthy to be looked at,) but the things which are not seen are eternal,” and therefore more prevalent with a

believing soul, than either the enticing pleasures of sin for a season, or the light and short afflictions, or the death that standeth in our way. (2 Cor. iv. 16—18; Heb. ii. 24—26.)

2. A second antidote against the enmity of death, that is given us at the time of our conversion, is, the pardon of our sins, and justification of our persons by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. When once we are forgiven, we are out of the reach of the greatest terror, being saved from the second death. Though we must feel the killing stroke, we are delivered from the damning stroke. Yea, more than so, it shall save us by destroying us; it shall let us into the glorious presence of our Lord, by taking us from the presence of our mortal friends; it shall help us into eternity, by cutting off our time. For in the hour that we were justified and made the adopted sons of God, we were also made the heirs of heaven, even co-heirs with Christ, and shall be glorified with him, when we have suffered with him. (Rom. viii. 17.) As death was promoting the life of the world when it was killing the Lord of life himself, so is it hastening the deliverance of believers when it seems to be undoing them. No wonder if death be that man's terror that must be conveyed by it into hell, or that imagineth that he shall perish as the beast. But to him that knows it will be his passage into rest, and that angels shall convey his soul to Christ, what an antidote is there ready for his faith to use against the enmity and excess of fears. Hence faith proceedeth in its triumph; "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.) Let him inordinately fear death that is loth to be with Christ, or that is yet the heir of death eternal. Let him fear that is yet in the bondage of his sin, and in the power of the prince of darkness, and is not by justification delivered from the curse. But joy and holy triumph are more seemly for the justified.

3. A third antidote against the enmity of death is, the holiness of the soul. By this the power of sin is mortified; and, therefore, the fears of death cannot actuate and use it, as in others they may do. By this, the interest of the flesh is cast aside as nothing, and the flesh itself is crucified with Christ: and, therefore, the destruction of the flesh will seem the more tolerable, and the fears of it will be a less temptation to the soul. By this we are already crucified to the world, and the world to us; and therefore we can more easily leave the world.

We now live by another life than we did before ; being dead in ourselves, our life is hid with Christ in God ; and being crucified with Christ, we now so live, as that it is not we, but Christ liveth in us : the life which we live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God that hath loved us. (Gal. ii. 20.) The things that made this life too dear to us are now, as it were, annihilated to us ; and when we see they are nothing, they can do nothing with us. Sanctification also maketh us so weary of sin, as being our hated enemy, that we are the more willing to die, that it may die that causeth us to die : and especially the Holy Ghost, which we then receive, is in us a divine and heavenly nature, and so inclineth us to God and heaven. This nature principally consisteth in the superlative love of God. And love carrieth out the soul to the beloved. As the nature of a prisoner in a dungeon carrieth him to desire liberty and light ; so the nature of a holy soul in flesh inclineth it to desire to be with Christ. As love maketh husband, and wife, and dearest friends to think the time long while they are asunder ; so doth the love of the soul to God. How fain would the holy, loving soul behold the pleased face of God, and be glorified in the beholding of his glory, and live under the fullest influences of his love. This is our conquest over the enmity of death. As strong as death is, love is stronger. “ Love is strong as death,—the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame (which will not, by the terrible face of death, be hindered from ascending up to God). Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it : if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, (that is, to bribe it, and divert it from its object,) it would utterly be contemned.” (Sol. Song viii. 6, 7.) If the love of David could carry Jonathan to hazard his life, and deny a kingdom for him, and the love of David to Absalom made him wish that he had died for him, and the love of friends, (yea, lustful love,) hath carried many to cast away their lives ; no wonder if the love of God in his saints prevail against the fear of death. The power of holy love made Moses say, “ Else let my name be blotted out of the book of life.” And it made Paul say, that he could wish that he were accursed from Christ for his brethren and kindred according to the flesh. (Rom. ix. 3.) And, doubtless, he felt the fire burning in his breast when he broke out into that triumphant challenge, “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness,

or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 35—39.) You see here what it is that conquereth the enmity of death in our sanctification; even that powerful love of God that is then given us, which will go to him through the most cruel death.

4. A fourth antidote that is given us by Christ against the enmity of death, is the Holy Ghost, as he is the comforter of the saints. He makes it his work to corroborate and confirm them. As sin hath woven calamities into our lives, and filled us with troubles, and griefs, and fears; so Christ doth send his Spirit to undo these works of Satan, and to be a comforter, as well as a sanctifier to his members. As the sanctifying Spirit striveth against the enticing, sinful flesh, so the comforting Spirit striveth against the troubling flesh; as also against the persecuting, as well as the tempting world, and the vexing, as well as the tempting devil. "And greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John iv. 4.) The Spirit of Christ overcomes the disquieting, as well as the tempting spirit; but with some difference; because our comforts are not in this life so necessary to us as our holiness. Joy being part of our reward, is not to be expected certainly or constantly, in any high degree, till we come to the state of our reward: and, therefore, though the Holy Ghost will carry on the work of sanctification, universally, constantly, and certainly in the elect; yet, in many of them, his comforting work is more obscure and interrupted. And yet he is a conqueror here: for his works must be judged of in reference to their ends: and our comfort on earth is given us for our encouragement in holy ways, that we be not stopped or diverted by the fear of enemies; and also to help on our love to God, and to quicken us in thanks and praise, and draw up our hearts to the life to come, and make us more serviceable to others. And such a measure of comfort we shall have as conduceth to these ends, and is suitable to our present state, and the employment God hath for us in the world if we do not wilfully grieve our Comforter, and quench our joys.

So that when death and the grave appear before, and our

flesh is terrified with the sight of these Anakims, and we say, 'We are not able to overcome them,' and so brings up an evil report upon the promised land, and casts us sometimes into murmuring, lamentation, and weakening discouragements, yet does the Holy Ghost cause faith and hope (as Caleb and Joshua) to still the soul, (Numb. xiii.,) and causeth us to condemn these giants, and say "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." (Ver. 30.) The comforting Spirit showeth us his death that conquered death, (Heb. ii. 14, 15,) even the cross on which he triumphed openly when he seemed to be conquered. (Col. ii. 15.) He showeth us the glorious resurrection of our Head, and his promise of our own resurrection. He showeth us our glorified Lord, to whom we may boldly and confidently commend our departing souls. (Acts vii. 59.) And he showeth us the angels that are ready to be their convoy. And he maketh all these considerations effectual, and inwardly exciteth our love and heavenly desires, and giveth us a triumphing courage and consolation. So that death doth not encounter us alone, and in our own strength, but finds us armed and led on by the Lord of life, who helps us by a sling and stone to conquer this Goliath. If a draught of wine, or some spiritfui reviving liquor can take off fears and make men bold, what then may the Spirit of Christ do by his powerful encouragements and comforts on the soul. Did we but see Christ or an angel standing by our sick-beds, and saying 'Fear not, I will convoy thy soul to God; this day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' what an unspeakable comfort would this be to a dying man? Why, the Spirit is Christ's agent here on earth; and what the Spirit speaks, Christ speaks; and, therefore, we may take its comforting words as spoken to us by Christ himself; who spoke the like to the penitent thief, to show believers the virtue of his cross, and what they also may expect from him in their extremity. And our Physician is most wise, and keeps his cordials for a fainting time. The Spirit useth to sustain and comfort us most in our greatest necessities. We need not comforts against death so much in the time of prosperity and health as when death draws near. In health we have ordinarily more need of quickening than of comforting; and more need to be awakened from security to a due preparation for death, than to be freed from the terrible forethoughts of it; though inordinate fears of death be hurtful to us, security and deadness hurts us more; and therefore the Spirit worketh according to our necessities, And when death

is nearest, and like to be most dreadful, he usually giveth the liveliest sense of the joys beyond it, to abate the enmity, and encourage the departing soul. And if the comfort be but small, it is precious, because it is most pure, as being then mixed with no carnal joys; and because it is most seasonable in so great a strait. If we have no more but mere support, it will be yet a precious mercy. And thus I have done with the third degree of the destruction of death's enmity, by these four antidotes, which we receive at our conversion, and the consequents thereof.

4. The fourth degree of this enemy's destruction is by itself, or rather by Christ at the time, and by the means of death, which, contrary to its nature, shall advantage our felicity. When death hath done its worst, it hath half killed itself in killing us. It hath then dismissed our imprisoned souls, and ended even our fears of death, and our fears of all the evils of this life. It hath ended our cares, and griefs, and groans. It hath finished our work, and ended all our weariness and trouble. And more than this it ends our sinning, and so destroyeth that which caused it, and that which the inordinate fears of itself had caused in us. It is the time when sin shall gasp its last, and so far our physician will perfect the cure; and our greatest enemy shall follow us no further. It is the door by which the soul must pass to Christ in paradise.

If any papist shall hence plead that therefore all men must be perfect without sin before death, or else go to purgatory to be cleansed, because as we die, so Christ will find us; or if they ask how death can perfect us? I answer them, 'It is Christ our physician that finisheth the cure, and death is the time in which he doeth it.' And if he undertake then to do it, it concerns not us to be too inquisitive how he doeth it. What if the patient understand not how blood-letting cureth the infected blood that is left behind? Must he therefore plead against his physician? and say, 'It will not be done,' because he knoweth not how it is done? We feel that here we have our sinful imperfections. We have for all that a promise that we shall be with Christ when death hath made its separation; and we are assured that no sin doth enter there. And is not this enough for us to know.

But yet I see not why the difficulty of the objection should trouble us at all. Death doth remove us from this sinful flesh, and admits the soul into the sight of God. And in the very in-

stant of its remove it must needs be perfected, even by that remove, and by the first appearance of his blessed face. If you bring a candle into a dark room, the access of the light expelleth the darkness at the same instant; and you cannot say that they consist together one moment of time. So cold is expelled by the approach of heat. And thus when death hath opened the door, and let us into the immortal light, neither before nor after, but in that instant, all the darkness and sinful imperfections of our souls are dissipated. Throw an empty bottle into the sea, and the emptiness ceaseth by the filling of the water, neither before nor after, but in that instant.

If this should not satisfy any, let it satisfy them, that the Holy Ghost in the instant of death can perfect his work.

So that we need not assert a perfection on earth, (which on their grounds must be the case of all that will escape hell and purgatory,) nor yet any purgatory torments after death, for the deliverance of the soul from the relics of sin; seeing, at the instant of death, by the Spirit, or by the deposition of the flesh, or by the sight of God, or by the sight of our glorified Redeemer, or by all, this work will be easily and infallibly accomplished.

5. The last degree and perfect conquest will be at the resurrection. And this is the victory that is mentioned in my text. All that is fore-mentioned doth abate the enmity, and conquer death in some degree; but the enmity, and the enemy itself, is conquered at the resurrection, and not till then. And therefore death is the last enemy to be destroyed. The body lieth under the penal effects of sin until the resurrection. And it is penal to the soul to be in a state of separation from the body, though it be a state of glory that it is in with Christ: for it is deprived of the fulness of glory, which it shall attain at the resurrection, when the whole man shall be perfected and glorified together. Then it is that the Mediator's work will be accomplished; and all things shall be restored; and all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth. (John v. 28.) "For this is the Father's will that sent him, that of all that he hath given him, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John vi. 39, 40.) We "have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (Acts xxiv. 15.) "As by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection from the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 21.) "And there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev.

xxi. 4.) No more diseases, or fears of death, or grave, or of corruption. No terrible enemy shall stand betwixt us and our Lord, to frighten our hearts from looking towards him. O what a birth-day will that be, when graves shall bring forth so many millions of sons for glory ! How joyful will the soul and body meet that were separated so long ! Then sin hath done its worst, and can do no more. Then Christ hath done all and hath no more to do as our Redeemer, but to justify us in judgment, and give us possession of the joy that he is preparing. And then he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father.

If you expect now that I should give you reasons why death is the last enemy to be destroyed, though much might be said from the nature of the matter, the wisdom and will of God shall be to me instead of all other reasons, being the fountain and the sum of all. He knows best the order that is agreeable to his works and ends, to his honour, and to our good. And therefore to his wisdom we submit, in the patient expectance of the accomplishment of his promises.

Use. 1. I now come to show you the usefulness of this doctrine, for the further information of our understandings, the well-ordering of our hearts, and the reforming of our lives. And first, you may hence be easily resolved, whether death be truly penal to the godly ? Which some have been pleased to make a controversy of late. Though I am past doubt but the hearts of those men do apprehend it as a punishment whose tongues and pens do plead for the contrary. “Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return,” was part of the sentence passed on Adam and all his posterity ; which then proved its punishment, and it was not remitted to Adam, that at the same time had the promise of a Redeemer, nor is it remitted to any of us all. Were it not for sin, God would not inflict it ; who hath sworn that he takes “no pleasure in the death of sinners ;” and that he “afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the sons of men.” But my text itself decides the controversy : sin and punishment are the evils that Christ removeth ; and if death were no punishment, (as it is no sin,) how could it be an enemy, and the last enemy to be destroyed by the Redeemer ? When we feel the enmity before described against our souls, and also know its enmity to our bodies, we cannot think that God would do all this, were it not for sin. Especially when we read that “death passeth upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. v. 12.) And that “the wages of sin is death.” (Rom. vi. 23.) Though Christ do us

good by it, that proveth it not to be no punishment ; for castigatory punishments are purposely to do good to the chastised. Indeed we may say, “O death, where is thy sting?” Because that the mortal evil to the soul is taken out ; and because we foresee the resurrection by faith, when we shall have the victory by Christ. But thence to conclude that death hath no sting now to a believer, is not only besides, but against the text ; which, telling us that the sting of death is sin, and that the strength of sin is the law, doth inform us, that death could not kill us, and be death to us, if sin gave it not a sting to do it with. As sin could not oblige us to this punishment, if the threatening of the law were not its strength. But Christ hath begun the conquest, and will finish it.

Use 2. From all this enmity in death, we may see what it is that sin hath done ; and, consequently, how vile and odious it is, and how we should esteem and use it. Sin hath not only forfeited our happiness, but laid those impediments in the way of our recovery, which will find us work, and cause our danger and sorrow while we live. And death is not the least of these impediments. O foolish man, that still will love such a mortal enemy ! If another would rob them but of a groat, or defame them, or deprive them of any accommodation, how easily can they hate them, and how hardly are they reconciled to them. But sin depriveth them of their lives, and separates the soul and body asunder, and forfeiteth their everlasting happiness, and sets death betwixt them and the glory that is purchased by Christ, and yet they love it, and will not leave it. Though God has made them, and sustains them, and provides for them, and all their hope and help is in him, they are not so easily drawn to love him ; and yet they can love the sin that would undo them. Though Christ would deliver them, and bring them to everlasting blessedness, and hath assumed flesh, and laid down his life to testify his love to them, yet are they not easily brought to love him ; but the sin that made them enemies to God, and hath brought them so near to everlasting misery, this they can love, that deserves no love. A minister, or other friend, that would draw them from their sin to God, and help to save them, they quarrel against, as if he were their enemy ; but their foolish companions, that can laugh and jest with them at the door of hell, and clap them on the back, and drive away the care of their salvation, and harden them against the fear of God, these are the only acceptable men to them. O Christians !

leave this folly to the world, and do you judge of sin by its sad effects. You feel, (if you have any feeling in you,) in some measure, what it hath done against your souls. The weakness of your faith and love, the distance of your hearts from God, your doubts and troubles, tell you that it is not your friend; you must shortly know what it will do to your bodies. As it keeps them in pain, and weariness, and weakness, so it will, ere long, deliver them up to the jaws of death, which will spare them no more than the beasts that perish. Had it not been for sin we should have had no cause to fear a dissolution; nor have had any use for a coffin or a winding-sheet; nor have been beholden to a grave, to hide our carcasses from the sight and smell of the living. But as Enoch and Elias were translated when they had walked with God, even so should we: as those that are alive, and remain at the coming of Christ, shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall they ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. iv. 17.)

Use sin, therefore, as it will use you. Spare it not, for it will not spare you. It is your murderer, and the murderer of the world. Use it therefore as a murderer should be used. Kill it before it kills you; and then, though it kill your bodies, it shall not be able to kill your souls; and though it bring you to the grave, as it did your head, it shall not be able to keep you there. If the thoughts of death, and the grave, and rottenness, be not pleasant to you, let not the thoughts of sin be pleasant. Harken to every temptation to sin, as you would harken to a temptation to self-murder; and as you would do if the devil brought you a knife, and tempted you to cut your throat with it; so do when he offereth you the bait of sin. You love not death, love not the cause of death. Be ashamed to stand weeping over a buried friend, and never to weep over a sinning or ungodly friend, nor once to give them a compassionate, earnest exhortation to save their souls. Is it nothing to be "dead in trespasses and sins?" (Eph. ii. 1, 5; Col. ii. 13.) Yea, it is a worse death than this, that is the wages of sin, and the fruit which it brings forth. (Rom. vi. 21, 23, and vii. 5.) Surely God would never thus use men's bodies, and forsake them soul and body for ever, if sin were not a most odious thing. What a poison is this that kills so many millions, and damnable so many millions, and cannot be cured but by the blood of Christ! That killed our physician that never tasted it, because he came

so near to us! O unbelieving, stupid souls! that smart and sin, and groan and sin, and weep and lament our bodily sufferings, and yet sin still! that fear a grave, and fear not sin! that have heard, and seen, and felt so much of the sad effects, and yet sin still! (Psalm lxxviii. 32.) Alas! that murderers should be so common, and that we should be no wiser, when we have paid so dear a price for wisdom!

Use 3. From the enmity of death we may further learn, that man hath now a need of grace for such exceeding difficulties which were not before him in his state of innocency. Though Adam was able to have obeyed perfectly without sin, and had grace sufficient to have upheld him, and conquered temptations, if he had done his part, which by that grace he might have done; yet whether that grace was sufficient to the works that we are called to, is a doubt that many have been much troubled with. It is certain that he was able to have done any thing that was suitable to his present state, if it were commanded him; and it is certain that much that is now our duty, would have been unsuitable to his state. But whether it belonged to his perfection, to be able and fit for such duties, (that were then unsuitable to him,) on supposition they had been suitable and duties, this is the difficulty which some make to prove that such works cannot now be required of us without suitable help, because we lost no such grace in Adam. But this need not trouble us; for, first, though Adam was put on no such difficulty in particular as to encounter death, yet the perfect obedience to the whole law required a great degree of internal, habitual holiness; and, to determine the case, whether our particular difficulties, or his sinless, perfect obedience, required greater strength and help, is a matter of more difficulty than use. For, secondly, it is but about the degrees of holiness in him and us, and not about the kind, that the difficulty lieth. For it is the same end that he was created for, and disposed to by nature, and that we are redeemed for, and disposed to supernaturally.

But yet it is worthy our observation what a difficulty sin hath cast before us in the way of life, which Adam was unacquainted with; that so we may see the nature of our works, and the excellency of the Redeemer's grace. Adam was but to seek the continuance of his life, and a translation to glory, without the terrors of interposing death; he was never called to prepare to

die, nor to think of the state of a separated soul; nor to mind, and love, and seek a glory to which there is no (ordinary) passage but by death. This is the difficulty that hath caused, against which we have need of the special assistance of the example, and doctrine, and promise, and Spirit of the Redeemer. Adam was never put to study how to get over this dreadful gulf. The threatening of death was to raise such a fear in him as was necessary to prevent it; but those fears did rather hold him closer to the way of life, than stand between him and life, to his discouragement. But we have a death to fear which must be suffered, that cannot be avoided. The strange condition of a separated soul (so unlike to its state while resident in the body) doth require in us a special faith to apprehend it, and a special revelation to discover it. To desire, and love, and long for, and labour after such a time as this, when one part of us must lie rotting in the grave, and the separated soul must be with Christ alone till the resurrection, and to believe and hope for that resurrection, and to deny ourselves, and forsake all the world, and lay down our lives when Christ requireth it, by the power of this faith and hope, this is a work that innocent Adam never knew; this is the high employment of a Christian. To have our hearts and conversations in heaven, (Matt. vi. 21; Phil. iii. 20,) when death must first dissolve us before we can possess it, here is the noble work of faith.

Use 4. Moreover, this enmity of death may help us to understand the reason of the sufferings and death of Christ. That he gave his life a ransom for us, and a sacrifice for sin, and so to make satisfaction to the offended Majesty, is a truth that every Christian doth believe. But there was another reason of his death that all of us do not duly consider of, and improve, to the promoting of our sanctification as we ought. Death is so great an enemy, as you have heard, and so powerful to deter our hearts from God, and dull our desires to the heavenly felicity, that Christ was fain to go before us, to embolden the hearts of believers to follow him. He suffered death (with the rest of his afflictions) to show us that it is a tolerable evil. Had he not gone before and overcome it, it would have detained us its captives. Had he not merited and purchased us a blessed resurrection, and opened heaven to all believers, and by death overcome him that had the power of death, (as God's executioner,) that is, the devil, we should, all our lifetime, have been still subjected unto bondage, by the fears

of death. (Heb. ii. 14.) But when we see that Christ hath led the way, as the victorious Captain of our salvation, and that he is made perfect by sufferings, (in his advancement unto glory,) and that, for the sufferings of death (which by the grace of God he tasted for every man), he is crowned with glory and honour. (Heb. ii. 9, 10.) This puts a holy valour into the soul, and causeth us cheerfully to follow him. Had we gone first, and the task of conquering death been ours, we had been overcome. But he that hath led us on, hath hewed down the enemy before him, and first prepared us the way, and then called us to follow him, and to pass the way that he hath first made safe, and also showed us, by his example, that it is now made passable. For it was one in our nature, that calleth us his brethren, that took not the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, that is one with us, as the Sanctifier and the sanctified are, and to whom as children we are given, who hath passed through death and the grave before us, and therefore we may the boldier follow him. (Heb. ii. 11—13, 16.) “Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name.” (Phil. ii. 8, 9.) Hereby he hath showed us that death is not so dreadful a thing, but that voluntary obedience may and must submit unto it. As Abraham’s faith and obedience were tried in the offering up of his son to death at God’s command, so the children of Abraham, and the heirs of the promise, must follow him in offering up themselves, if God require it, and in submitting to our natural death (for that he doth require of all). Examples work more than bare precepts; and the experiments of others do take more with us than mere directions. It satisfieth a sick man more to read a book of medicinal observations, where he meets with many that were in his own case, and finds what cured them, than to read the praxis or medicinal recipes alone. It encourageth the patient much, when the physician tells him, ‘I have cured many of your disease by such a medicine; nay, I was cured thus of the same myself.’ So doth it embolden a believer to lay down his life, when he hath not only a promise of a better life, but seeth that the promiser went that way to heaven before him. Oh, therefore, let us learn and use this choice remedy, against the immoderate fear of death. Let faith take a view of him that was dead and is alive, that was buried and is risen, and was humbled and is now exalted. Think

with yourselves, when you must think of dying, that you are but following your conquering Lord, and going the way that he hath gone before you, and suffering what he underwent and conquered. And, therefore, though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, resolve that you will fear no evil. (Psalm xxiii. 4.) And if he call you after him, follow him with a christian boldness. As Peter cast himself into the sea, and walked on the waters, when he saw Christ walk there, and had his command; so let us venture on the jaws of death, while we trace his steps, and hear his encouraging commands and promises. (John xxi. 7; Matt. xiv. 28, 29.)

Use 5. Moreover, from this doctrine we may be informed of the mistakes of many Christians, that think they have no saving grace because they are afraid of dying, and because these fears deter their souls from desiring to be with Christ. And hence they may perceive that there is another cause of these distempers, even the enmity of death that standeth in the way. You think that if you had any love to Christ you should more desire to be with him, and that if your treasure were in heaven, your hearts would be more there, and that if you truly took it for your felicity, you could not be so unwilling to be removed to it, for no man is unwilling to be happy, or to attain his end. But stay a little, and better consider of your case. Is it Christ that your heart is thus averse to? Or is it only death that standeth in the way? You are not, I hope, unwilling to see the face of God, nor unwilling to be translated from earth to heaven, but unwilling to die. It is not because you love the creature better than the Creator, but because you are afraid of death. You may love God, and long to be perfected in holiness, and to see his glory, and to have the most near communion with him, and yet at the same time you may fear this enemy that standeth in your way, I mean, not only the pain of death, but principally the dissolution of our natures, and the separation of the soul from the body, and its abode in a separated state, and the body's abode in dust and darkness. Grace itself is not given us to reconcile us to corruption, and make death, as death, to seem desirable, but to cause us patiently to bear the evil, because of the good that is beyond it. It is not our duty to love death as death. Had it not been naturally an evil to be dreaded and avoided, God would not have made it the matter of his threatening, nor would it have been a fit means to restrain men from transgression. To threaten a man with

a benefit, as such, is a contradiction. Inquire, therefore, into your hearts, whether there be not a belief of heaven, a love to God, a desire to enjoy and please him, even while you draw back, and seem to be averse; and whether it be not only a lothness to die, and not a lothness to be with Christ.

For the fuller discovery of this, (because I find that our comfort much dependeth on it,) I shall try you by these following questions.

Quest. 1. What is it that is ungrateful to you in your meditations of your change? Is it God and heaven, or is it death? If it be only death, it seems it is not the want of love to God and heaven that causeth your averseness. If it be God himself that is ungrateful to your thoughts, it is because you desire not his nearer presence, or communion with him in the state of glory. Or is it only because you fear lest you have no interest in his love, and shall not attain the blessedness which you desire? If it be the first, I must confess it proves a graceless soul, and signifieth the want of love to God. But if it be the latter only, it may stand with grace, for desire is a true signification of love, though there be doubts and fears lest we shall miss the attainment of those desires.

Quest. 2. Would you not gladly hear the news of your removal, if you might be changed without death, and translated to heaven as Enoch and Elias were, and as Christ at his ascension? Had you not far rather be thus changed than abide on earth? If so, then it seems it is not God and heaven that you are against, but death. Nay, if you could reach heaven by travelling a thousand miles, would you not gladly take the journey as soon as you had got assurance of your title to it, and done the work of God on earth? If it were but as Peter, James, and John, to go with Christ into an exceeding high mountain, and there to see him in glory, (Matt. xvii. 1,) would you not gladly do it? It seems that thou desirest to see the Lord, and thy love is to him, though thou be afraid of death.

Quest. 3. Consider of the nature of the heavenly felicity, and try whether thou love it in the several parts. One part is our personal perfection, that our souls shall be free from ignorance, and error, and sin, and sorrow, and enlarged for the perfect love of God, and our bodies at the resurrection made like the glorious body of our Lord, (Phil. iii. 21,) and wouldest thou not be thus perfected in soul and body? Another part is, that we should live with the society of angels and glorified saints.

And wouldest thou not rather have such society than the company of sinners, and enemies, and imperfect saints on earth? Another part is, we shall see our glorified Head, and be with him where he is, that we may behold his glory. And doth not thy heart desire this? But the perfection of our happiness is, that we shall see the face of the glory of God, which is the light of that world, as truly as the sun is the light of this; and that we shall be filled up with the feeling of his love, and abound with love to him again, and perfectly delighted in this communion of love, and express in the praises of the Lord, and thus make up the new Jerusalem, where God will place his glorious presence, and in which he will for evermore take pleasure. And is there anything in this that thy soul is against, and which thou dost not value above this world? If thou find that all the parts are sweet, and the description of heaven is most grateful to thee, and that this is the state that thou wouldest be in, it seems then it is not heaven, but death, that thou art averse from, and that maketh thee so loth to hear the tidings of thy change.

Quest. 4. Couldst thou not joyfully see the coming of Christ, if it were this day, if thou have done thy work, and art assured of his love? The apostle hath told us by the word of the Lord, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) And this is the doctrine that comforteth believers. (Verse 18.) Would it not rejoice your hearts if you were sure to live to see the coming of the Lord, and to see his glorious appearing and retinue? If you were not to die, but to be caught up thus to meet the Lord, and to be changed immediately into an immortal, incorruptible, glorious state, would you be averse to this? Would it not be the greatest joy that you could desire? For my own part, I must confess to you, that death, as death, appeareth to me as an enemy, and my nature doth abhor and fear it. But the thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful to me; so that if I were but sure that I should live to see it, and that the trumpet should sound, and the dead should rise, and the Lord appear before the period of my age, it would be the joyfullest tidings to me in the world. Oh, that I might see his kingdom come! It is the character of his saints to love his appearing,

(2 Tim. iv. 8,) and to look “for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” (Tit. ii. 13.) “The Spirit and the bride say, Come : even so, come, Lord Jesus,” (Rev. xxii. 17, 20,) come quickly, is the voice of faith, and hope, and love. But I find not that his servants are thus characterized by their desires to die. It is, therefore, the presence of their Lord that they desire ; but it is death that they abhor. And, therefore, though they can submit to death, it is the coming of Christ that they love and long for ; and it is interposing death that causeth them to draw back. Let not Christians be discouraged by mistakes, and think that they love not God and glory, because they love not this enemy in the way, nor think that they are graceless or unbelieving worldlings, because they are afraid of death, as death.

But perhaps you will say, that if grace prevail not against the fears of death, then fear is predominant, and we are not sincere. To which I answer, that you must distinguish between such a prevailing as maintaineth our sincerity, and such a prevailing as also procureth our fortitude and joy. If grace prevail not to keep us upright in a holy life, renouncing the world, and crucifying the flesh, and devoting ourselves entirely to God, though the fear of death would draw us from it, then it is a sign that we are not sincere. But if grace do this much, and yet prevail not against all fears and unwillingness to die, but leave us under uncomfortable, hideous thoughts of death, this proves us not to be unsound. For the soul may savingly love God that is afraid of death, and he may truly love the end, that fears this dark and dismal way. Yet must there be so much to prove our uprightness, as that in our deliberate choice we will rather voluntarily pass through death, either natural or violent, than lose the happiness beyond it. Though we love not death, yet we love God and heaven so well that we will submit to it. And though we fear it and abhor it, yet not so much as we fear and abhor the loss of heaven. Let not poor Christians therefore wrong themselves, and deny the graces of the Spirit, as if they had more mind of earth than heaven, and of things temporal than of things eternal, because they are afraid to die. All suffering is grievous, and not joyous to our nature. Paul himself desired not to be unclothed, but “clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life,” (2 Cor. v. 2, 4,) it being better to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Even Christ himself had a will that desired that the cup might

have passed from him, if it had been agreeable to his Father's will, and the ends of his undertaken office. (Matt. xxvi. 41, 42.) Raise therefore no unjust conclusions from these natural fears, nor from the imperfection of our conquest; but praise him that relieveth us, and abateth the enmity of death, and furnisheth us with his antidotes, and will destroy his enemy at last.

Use 6. From the enmity of death we may further learn to study and magnify the victorious grace of our Redeemer, which overcometh the enemy, and turneth our hurt into our benefit, and maketh death a door of life. Though death be the enemy that seemeth to conquer us, and to destroy and utterly undo us, yet being conquered itself by Christ, it is used by him to our great advantage, and sanctified to be a very great help to our salvation. The suffering of Christ himself was in the hour of his enemies, and the power of darkness, (Luke xxii. 53,) which seemed to have prevailed against him; when yet it was but a destroying of death by death, and the purchasing of life and salvation for the world. So also in our death, though sin and Satan seem to conquer, it is they that are conquered, and not we, who are supervictors through him that hath loved us. (Rom. viii. 37.) They destroy themselves when they seem to have destroyed us. As the serpent bruised but the heel of Christ, who bruised his head; so doth he bruise but our heel, who, in that conflict, and by the means of his own execution through the strength of Christ, do bruise his head. (Gen. iii. 15.) And this is the upshot of all his enmity against the woman's holy seed. Though death was unsuitable to innocent man, and is still a natural enemy to us all; yet unto sinners it is an evil that is suitable and fit to destroy the greater evil that did cause it, and to prevent the everlasting evil. The foreknowledge of our certain death is a very great help to keep us humble, and disgrace all the seducing pleasures of the flesh, and all the profits and honours of the world, and so to enervate all temptations. It is a singular help to quicken a stupid, careless sinner, and to awaken men to prepare for the life to come, and to excite them to seek first the kingdom of God, and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure; and to consider, seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons they ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening to the coming of the day of God. (2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.) When we drop asleep, the remembrance of death may quickly awake us; when we grow slack, it is our spur to put us on, to mend our

pace. Who is so mad as wilfully to sin with death in his eye? Or who so dead as, with death in his eye, to refuse to live a godly life, if he have any spiritual light and feeling? Experience telleth us, that when health and folly cause us to promise ourselves long life, and think that death is a great way off, it lamentably cools our zeal, and strengthens our temptations, and dulls our souls to holy operations. And the approach of death puts life into all our apprehensions and affections. It is a wonderful hard thing to maintain our lively apprehensions, and strong affections, and tenderness of conscience, and self-denial, and easy contempt of earthly things, when we put far from us the day of death. We see what a stir men make for the profits and honours of this world, and how fast they hold their fleshly pleasures, while they are in health, and how contemptuously they speak of all, and bitterly complain of the vanity and vexation when they come to die. And if our lives and the world be brought hereby into such disorders, when men live so short a time on earth, what monsters of ambition, and covetousness, and luxury would men be, if they lived as long as before the flood, even to eight hundred or nine hundred years of age? Doubtless long life was so great a temptation then to man (in his corrupt state), that it is no wonder if his wickedness was great upon the earth; and if it prepared for that great destruction of the universal deluge. Should men live now but to the age of three hundred or four hundred years, I fear it would so tempt them to overvalue the world, and so embolden them to delay repentance, that one would be as a wolf to another, and the weak but be a prey to the strong, and wickedness would overwhelm the world, despising the reins, and bearing down religious and civil opposition. But when we stand over the grave, and see our friends laid in the dust, how mortified do we seem? How do we even shake the head at the folly of ambitious and covetous worldlings, and are ashamed to think of fleshly lusts! So far are men from owning their vanities, when that silent teacher standeth by. It is death that helps to humble the proud, and abate the arrogancy and obstinacy of the wicked, and make them regard the messengers of Christ, that before despised them and their message. It is death that allayeth the ebullition of distracting thoughts and passions, and helpeth to bring men to themselves, and fixeth giddy, discomposed minds, and helps to settle the light and the unsettled, and to restrain the worst. As we are beholden to the gallows for our purses and our lives, so are we to the grave and hell for much

of the order that is in the world, and our peace and freedom procured thereby. But it is a greater good that it procureth to believers.

If you ask, how is all this to be ascribed to Christ? I answer, many ways. 1. It is he that hath now the keys or power of death and hell, even he that liveth and was dead, and that liveth for evermore, (Rev. i. 18,) and therefore is to be feared by the world. 2. It is he that hath by his blood and covenant brought us the hope of everlasting life, which is it that giveth the efficacy to death. Without this, men would be but desperate, and think that it is better have a little pleasure than none at all; and so would give up themselves to sin, and desperately gratify their flesh by all the wickedness they could devise. 3. And it is Christ that teacheth men the right use of death, by his holy doctrine, having brought life and immortality to light by his gospel. 4. And it is Christ that sendeth forth the holy Spirit, which only doth so illuminate the mind, and quicken and dispose the heart, that death may be savingly improved. The poison is our own, but it is his skill and love that hath made a sovereign antidote of it. And let our bodies die, so our sin may die. If the foresight of death destroy our sin, and further our sanctification, and the hour of death doth end our fears, and enter us into the state of glory; though we will love death as death never the better for this, much less the sin that caused it, yet must we admire the love of our Redeemer.

And it is not only the peril but also the terror of death that we are in part delivered from. Though Christ himself was in a bloody sweat in his agony before his death, and cried out on the cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" because he bore the sins of the world; yet death is welcome to many of his followers, that drink of his cup, and are baptised with his baptism: for they taste not of these dregs which he drank up, and they are strengthened by his supporting grace. He that doth comfort them against sin and hell, doth also comfort them against death. So great is the glory that he hath promised them, and so great is his comforting, confirming grace, that dreadful death is not great enough to prevail against them. As it was too weak to conquer Christ; so is it too weak to conquer his Spirit in his people's souls. Without Christ we could not live, and we durst not die; but through him we can do and suffer all things, and can boldly pass through this dark and shady vale of death; yea, we can desire to depart and to be with

Christ as best for us : for to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Phil. i. 21, 23.) For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And therefore sometimes we can groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. And we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord ; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord ; and therefore labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him : for we walk by faith and not by sight : and it is God that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit. (2 Cor. v. 1—10.) Though we long not to die, yet we long to see the face of God. And though we lay down our bodies with natural unwillingness, yet we lay down our sin and sorrows with gladness and spiritual delight. And though our hearts are ready to faint, as Peter's when he walked to Christ upon the waters, yet Christ puts forth his hand of love, and soon recovereth us from our fear and danger.

Melancholy and impatience may make men weary of their lives, and rush upon death with a false conceit that it will end their sorrows ; but this is not to conquer death, but to be conquered by a lesser evil ; and it is not an effect of fortitude, but of an imbecility and impotency of mind. And if a Brutus, a Cato, or a Seneca, be his own executioner, they do but choose a lesser evil, (in their conceits,) even a death which they account honourable, before a more ignominious death, or a life of shame, and scorn, and misery. But the true believer is raised above the fears of death by the love of God, and the hopes of glory ; and death (though ungrateful in itself) is welcome to him, as the way to his felicity.

Let tyrants and soldiers take it for their glory, that they can take away men's lives, (that is, they have the power of a serpent, or of ratsbane,) as if it were their honour to be their country's pestilence, and a ruler and a dose of poison were things of equal strength and use. But it is the glory of Christ to enable his disciples to conquer death, and bear the fury of the most cruel persecutors. The martyrs have been more joyful in their sufferings, than the judges that condemned them in their pomp and glory. When we are pressed above strength, and despair of life, and have the sentence of death in ourselves, we are then taught to trust in the living God that raiseth the dead. (2 Cor. i. 8—10.)

The saints by faith have been “tortured, not accepting deliverance ; that they might obtain a better resurrection :” they have “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings ; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment ; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword.” (Heb. xi. 35—37.) “Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ;” (1 Cor. xv. 57 ;) “They overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and love not their lives unto the death.” (Rev. xii. 11.) They “fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” (Luke xii. 4.) They trust upon his promise that hath said, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues : O grave, I will be thy destruction.” (Hos. xiii. 14.) “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” (Psalm cxvi. 15.) “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.” (Rev. xiv. 13.)

Use 7. Moreover, from the enmity of death we may be directed which way to bend our cares : and seeing where our difficulty most lieth, we may see which way our most diligent preparations must be turned. Death cannot be prevented, but the malignant influence of it on our souls may be much abated. If you let it work without an antidote, it will make you live like unbelieving worldlings ; it will deter your hearts from heaven, and dull your love to God himself, and make your meditations of him, and of your everlasting rest, to be seldom, and ungrateful to you ; and it will make you say, “It is good to be here ;” and have sweeter thoughts of this present life, than of your inheritance : it will rob you of much of your heavenly delights, and fill you with slavish fears of death, and subject you unto bondage all your lives, and make you die with agony and horror, so that your lives and deaths will be dishonourable to your holy faith, and to your Lord. If it were merely our own suffering by fears and horrors, or merely our loss of spiritual delights, the matter were great, but not so great. But it is more than this. For when our joys are overwhelmed with the fears of death, and turned into sorrows, our love to God will be abated, and we shall deny him the thanks and cheerful praises, which should be much of the employment of our lives. And we shall be much discomposed and unfitted for his service, and shall much dishonour him in the world ; and shall strengthen our temptations

to the overvaluing of earthly things. Think it not therefore a small, or an indifferent matter, to fortify your souls against these malignant fears of death. Make this your daily care and work ; your peace, your safety, your innocency, and usefulness, and the honour of God, do much lie on it. And it is a work of such exceeding difficulty that it requireth the best of your skill and diligence ; and when all is done, it must be the illuminating, quickening beams of grace, and the shining face of the eternal love that must do the work ; though yet your diligence is necessary to attend the Spirit, and use the means in subservience to grace, and in expectation of these celestial rays.

And above all, take heed lest you should think that carnal mirth, or mere security, and casting away the thoughts of death, will serve to overcome these fears ; or that it is enough that you resolve against them. For it is your safety that must be looked to, as well as your present ease and peace ; and fear must be so overcome, as that a greater misery may not follow : presumption and security will be of very short continuance. To die without fear, and pass into endless desperation, which fear should have wakened you to prevent, is no desirable kind of dying. And besides, resolving against the terrors of death will not prevent them. When death draws near, it will amaze you in despite of all your resolutions, if you are not furnished with a better antidote. The more jocund you have been in carnal mirth, and the more you have presumptuously slighted death, it is likely your horror will be the greater when it comes. And therefore see that you make a wise and safe preparation, and that you groundedly and methodically cure these fears, and not securely cast them away. Though I have given you, to this end, some directions in other writings, (in *The Saint's Rest*, and in the *Treatise of Self-denial*, and that of *Crucifying the World*,) yet I shall add here these following helps, which, faithfully observed and practised, will much promote your victory over death, which conquereth all the strength of flesh, and glory of this world.

Direct. 1. If you would overcome the danger and the fears of death, make sure of your conversion that it is sound : and see that you be absolutely devoted unto God without reserves. Should you be deceived in your foundations, your life, and hopes, and joys, would all be delusory things. Till sin be mortified, and your souls reconciled to God in Christ, you are still in danger of worse than death, and it is but the senselessness of your

dead condition that keepeth you from the terrors of damnation. But if you are sure that you are quickened by renewing grace, and possessed by the sanctifying Spirit, and made partakers of the divine nature, you have then the earnest of your inheritance, (Eph. i. 14 ; 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5,) and the fire is kindled in your breast, that in despite of death will mount you up to God.

Direct. 2. To conquer the enmity of death you must live by faith in Jesus Christ ; as men that are emptied of themselves, and ransomed from his hands that had the power of death, and as men that are redeemed from the curse, and are now made heirs of the grace of life, being made his members, who is the Lord of life, even the second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit. The serious, believing study of his design and office, (to destroy sin and death, and to bring many sons to glory,) and also of his voluntary suffering, and his obedience to the death of the cross, may raise us above the fears of death. When we live by faith as branches of this blessed vine, and are righteous with his righteousness, justified by his blood and merits, and sanctified by his word and Spirit, and find that we are united to him, we may then be sure that death cannot conquer us, and nothing can take us out of his hands, for our life being hid with Christ in God, we know that we shall live, because he liveth, (Col. iii. 3 ; John xiv. 19,) and that when Christ, who is our life, appeareth, we shall also appear with him in glory, (Col. iii. 4,) and that he will “ change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body, by his mighty power by which he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phil. iii. 21.) In our own strength we dare not stand the charge of death, and with it the charge of the law, and of our consciences. How dreadfully should we then be foiled and nonplussed if we must be found in no other righteousness but what we have received from the first Adam, and have wrought by the strength received from him. But being gathered under the wings of Christ, as the chickens under the wings of the hen, (Matt. xxiii. 37,) and being found then in him, having the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, we may boldly answer to all that can be charged on us to our terror. If we “ know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings and are made conformable unto his death ;” (Phil. iii. 10 ;) if we are dead with him to the world, and risen with him to a holy life ; if we have believingly traced him in his sufferings

and conquest, and perceive by faith how we participate in his victories, we shall then be able to grapple with the hands of death, and though we know the grave must be for awhile the prison of our flesh, we can by faith foresee the opening of our prison doors, and the loosing of our bonds, and the day of our last and full redemption. It strengtheneth us exceedingly to look “unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” When we consider what he endured against himself, we shall not be weary, nor faint in our minds. (Heb. xii. 2, 3.)

Direct. 3. Live also by faith on the heavenly glory. As one eye of faith must be on an humbled, crucified Christ, so must the other be on heaven, on a glorified Christ, and on the glory and everlasting love of God, which we shall there enjoy. This is it that conquereth the fears of death when we believe that we shall pass through it into everlasting life. If a man for health will take the most ungrateful potion, (the bitterness being short, and the benefit long,) and if he will suffer the surgeon to let out his blood, and in case of necessity to cut off a member, how light should we make of death, that have the assured hopes of glory to encourage us! What door so strait that we would not pass through if we could to our dearest friend! What way so foul that we would not travel to our beloved home! And shall death seem intolerable to us, that letteth in our souls to Christ? Well might Paul say, “To die is gain.” (Phil. i. 21.) When we gain deliverance from all those sins that did here beset us, and all those sorrows that sin had bred, we gain the accomplishment of our desires, and the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. We gain the crown that fadeth not away; a place before the throne of Christ, in the temple of God, in the city of God, the new Jerusalem; to eat of the hidden manna, and of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev. ii. 3.) We gain the place prepared for us by Christ in his Father’s house. (John xiv. 1, 2.) For we shall be with him where he is, that we may behold his glory. (John xvii. 24.) We shall gain the sight of the glory of God, and the feeling of his most precious love, and the fulness of joy that is in his presence, and the everlasting pleasures at his right hand. (Psalm xvi. 11.) And shall we think much to die for such a gain? We will put off our clothes, and welcome sleep, which is the image of death, that our bodies may have rest, and

refuse not thus to die every night, that we may rise more refreshed for our employments in the morning. And shall we stick at the unclothing of our souls in order to their everlasting rest? Set but the eye of faith to the prospective of the promise, and take a serious, frequent view of the promised land, and this, if any thing, will make death more welcome than physic to the sick, than unclothing to a beggar that puts on new, or better clothes. Shall a poor man cheerfully ply his labour all day in hope of a little wages at night, and shall not a believer cheerfully yield to death in hope of everlasting glory? So far as heaven is soundly believed, and our conversations and hearts are there, the fears of death will be assuaged, and nothing else will well assuage them.

Direct. 4. Moreover, if you will conquer the enmity of death, do all that you can to increase and exercise the love of God in you. For love will so incline you to the blessed object of it, that death will not be able to keep down the flame. Were God set as a seal upon our hearts, we should find that "Love is as strong as death, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame; many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it." (Sol. Song viii. 6, 7.) If carnal love have made the amorous to choose death that they might passionately express it, especially when they have heard of the death of their beloved; and if natural fortitude and love to their country have made many valiant men, though heathens, to contemn death, and readily lay down their lives; and if the love of fame and vainglory in a surviving name have caused many to die through pride; how much more will the powerful love of God put on the soul to leave this flesh and pass through death, that we may see his face, and fully enjoy the object of our love. So much as you love God, so much will you be above the terrors of the grave, and passed through death for the enjoyment of your beloved. "Perfect love casteth out fear," and "he that feareth is not made perfect in love." In death and judgment we shall have boldness if our love be perfect. (1 John iv. 17, 18.) This maketh the martyrs cheerfully lay down their lives for Christ; and love is glad of so precious an opportunity for its exercise and manifestation. Love is a restless working thing, that will give you no rest till your desires are attained, and you be with God. Nothing is so valiant as love. It rejoiceth when it meeteth with difficulties, which it may encounter for the sake of our beloved: it contemneth dangers; it

glorieth in sufferings; though it be humble, and layeth by all thoughts of merit, yet it rejoiceth in sufferings for Christ, and glorieth in the cross, and in the participation of his sufferings, and in the honourable wounds and scars which we receive for him that died for us.

Direct. 5. To overcome the terrors and enmity of death, it is necessary that we keep the conscience clear from the guilt of wilful sin, and of impenitency. If it may be, see that you wound it not; if you have wounded it, presently seek a cure, and live not in a wounded state. The face of death will waken conscience, and cause it to speak much louder than it did in health and in prosperity; and then sin will seem another thing, and wrath more terrible than it did in your security. Conscience will do much to make your burden light or heavy. If conscience groundedly speak peace, and all be sound and well at home, death will be less terrible, the heart being fortified against its enmity. But to have a pained body and a pained soul; a dying body, and a scorched conscience, that is afraid of everlasting death, this is a terrible case indeed. Speedily, therefore, get rid of sin, and get your consciences thoroughly cleansed by sound repentance and the blood of Christ. For so much sin as you bring to your death-bed, so much bitterness will there be in death. Away then with that sin that conscience tells you of, and touch the forbidden fruit no more, and kindle not the sparks of hell in your souls to make the sting of death more venomous. As it will quiet a believing soul through Christ, when he can say with Hezekiah, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." (Isa. xxxviii. 3.) And it will be our rejoicing if we have "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world." (2 Cor. i. 12.) So will it be most terrible to die in the fears of unpardoned sin, and to have conscience scourging us with the remembrance of our folly, when God is afflicting us, and we have need of a well-composed mind to bear the troubles of our flesh. A little from without is grievous, when any thing is amiss within. Get home, therefore, to Christ without delay; and cease not till you have peace in him, that death may find your consciences whole.

Direct. 6. Redeeming time is another means to prevent the hurtful fears of death. When we foreknow that it will shortly end our time, let us make the best of time while we have it.

And then when we find that our work is done, and that we did not loiter nor lose the time that God vouchsafed us, the end of it will be less grievous to us. A man that studieth his duty, and spareth for no cost or pains, and is as loth to lose an hour's time, as a covetous man is to lose an hundred pounds, will look back on his life, and look before him to his death, with greater peace, and less perplexity, than another man; but the thoughts of death must needs be terrible to a man that hath trifled away his life, and been an unthrift of his time. To think when you must die, that now you are at your last day or hour; and withal, to think how many hours you vainly lost, and that you knew not the worth of time till it was gone, will make death more bitter than now you can imagine. What else is death but the ending of our time? And what can be more necessary to a comfortable end, than faithfully to use it while we have it?

Direct. 7. Another help against the enmity of death is, the crucifying of the flesh, with its affections and lusts; and the conquest of the world by the life of faith, and crucifying it by the cross of Christ, and dying daily by the patient suffering of the cross ourselves. When we are loose from all things under the sun, and there is nothing that entangleth our affections on earth, a great part of the difficulty is then removed; but death will tear the heart that is glued to any thing in this world. Possess, therefore, as if you possessed not, and rejoice as if you rejoiced not, and use the world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world doth pass away. (1 Cor. vii. 29—31.) It is much for the sake of our flesh that must perish, that death doth seem so bitter to us. If, therefore, we can thoroughly subdue the flesh and live above its pleasures and desires, we shall the more easily bear its dissolution. Set up your senses then a little more, and let your hearts grow stranger to this world; and if you have known any persons, relations, accommodations after the flesh, from henceforth know them so no more. How terrible is death to an earthly-minded man, that had neglected his soul for a treasure here, which must then be dissipated in a moment. How easy is death to a heavenly mind, that is thoroughly weaned from this world, and taketh it but for his pilgrimage or passage unto life; and hath made it the business of his days to lay up for himself a treasure in heaven. He that hath unfeignedly made heaven his end in the course of his life, will most readily pass to it on the hardest terms, for every man is willing to attain his end.

Direct. 8. It will much help us against the enmity of death to be duly conformed to the image of God in the hatred of sin and love of holiness ; and especially in the point of justice. When we hate sin thoroughly, and find it so incorporated into our flesh, that they must live and die together, it will make death the more easy to us, because it will be the death of sin ; even of that sin which we most hate, and that God hateth, and that hath cost us so dear as it hath done. When we are in love with holiness, and know that we shall never be perfect in it till after death, it will make death the more welcome, as the passage to our desired life. When the justice, even the castigatory and vindictive justice of God, is more amiable in our eyes, and we are not blinded by self-love, to judge of God and of his ways, according to the interest of our flesh, we shall then consent to his dissolving stroke, and then see the bitterness of death proceedeth from that which is good in God, though from that which is evil in ourselves. Doubtless, as justice is one of the blessed attributes of God, so should it be amiable to man, there being nothing in God but what is lovely. It is the prevalency of self-love that makes men so insensible of the excellency of divine justice, while they speak so respectfully of his mercy. So far as men are carnal and selfish, they cannot love that by which they smart, or of which they are in danger ; but the soul that is got above itself, and is united unto God in Christ, and hath that image of God which containeth the impress and effect of all his attributes, hath such an habit of impartial justice in himself, and such a hatred of sin, and such a desire that the honour of God should be vindicated and maintained, and such an approbation of the justice of God, that he can the more easily consent or submit to the dissolving stroke of death ; he hateth his own sin, and loatheth himself for all his abominations, and is possessed with that justice that provoketh him to self-revenge in an ordinate sort, and therefore doth love and honour that justice that inflicteth on him the penalty of death, (especially since mercy hath made it a useful castigation,) as some penitent malefactors have been so sensible of their crimes, that they have not deprecated death, but consented to it as a needful work of justice (as it is written of the penitent murderer lately hanged at London). So holiness doth contain such a hatred of our own sins, and such impartial justice on God's behalf, that it will cause us to subscribe to the righteousness of his sentence, and the more quietly to yield to the stroke of death.

Direct. 9. It will somewhat abate the fears of death, to consider the restlessness and troubles of this life, and the manifold evils that end at death. And because this consideration is little available with men in prosperity, it pleaseth God to exercise us with adversity, that when we find there is no hope of rest on earth, we may look after it where it is, and venture on death by the impulse of necessity. Here we are continually burdened with ourselves, annoyed by our corruptions, and pained by the diseases of our souls; or endangered most when pained least. And would we be thus still? We live in the continual smart of the fruit of our own folly, and the hurts that we catch by our careless or inconsiderate walking, like children that often fall and cry; and would we still live such a life as this? The weakness of our faith, the darkness of our minds, the distance and strangeness of our souls to God, are a continual languishing and trouble to our hearts. How grievous is it to us that we can love him no more, nor be more assured of his love to us; that we find continually so much of the creature, and so little of God upon our hearts; that carnal affections are so easily kindled in us, and the love of God will scarce be kept in any life by the richest mercies, the most powerful means, and by our greatest diligence. Oh! what a death is it to our hearts that so many odious temptations should have such free access, such ready entertainment, such small resistance, and so great success: that such horrid thoughts of unbelief should look into our minds, and stay so long, and be so familiar with us, that the blessed mysteries of the gospel, and the state of separated souls, and the happiness of the life to come, are known so slightly, and believed so weakly and imperfectly, and meet with so many carnal questionings and doubts; that when we should be solacing our souls in the forethoughts of heaven, we look toward it with such strangeness and amazement, as if we staggered at the promise of God through unbelief; and there is so much atheism in our affections, God being almost as no God to them sometimes, and heaven almost as no heaven to them, that it shows there is too much in our understandings. Oh! what a death is it to our minds, that when we should live in the love of infinite goodness, we find such a remnant of carnal enmity, and God hath such resistance, and so narrow, so short, so cold, so unkind entertainment in those hearts that were made to love him, and that should know and own no love but his. What a bond-

age is it that our souls are so entangled with the creatures, and so detained from the love of God; and that we draggle on this earth, and can reach no higher; and the delightful communion with God and a conversation in heaven, are things that we have so small experience of. Alas! that we that are made for God, and should live to him, and be still upon his work, and know no other, should be so biassed by the flesh, and captivated by self-love, and lost at home, that our affections and intentions do hardly get above ourselves; but there we are too prone to terminate them all, and lose our God, even in a seeming religiousness, while we will be Gods to ourselves. How grievous is it that such wonders and glorious appearances of God, as are contained in the incarnation, life, and death of Christ, and in all the parts of the work of our redemption, should no more affect us than they do, nor take up our souls in more thankful admiration, nor ravish us into higher joys. Alas! that heaven commands our souls no more from earth. That such an infinite glory is so near to us, and we enjoy so little of it, and have no more savour of it upon our souls. That in the hands of God, and before his face, we do no more regard him. That the great and wonderful matters of our faith do so little affect us, that we are tempted thereby to question the sincerity of our faith, if not the reality of the things believed; and that so little of these great and wondrous things appeareth in our lives, that we tempt the world to think our faith is but a fancy. Is not all this grievous to an honest heart? And should we not be so far weary of such a life as this, as to be willing to depart and be with Christ.

If it would so much rejoice a gracious soul to have a stronger faith, a more lively hope, a more tender conscience, a more humble, self-abhorring heart, to be more fervent in prayer, more resolute against temptations, and more successfully to fight against them; with what desire and joy then should we look towards heaven, where we shall be above our strongest faith and hope, and have no more need of the healing graces or the healing ordinances, nor be put upon self-afflicting work, nor troubled with the temptations, nor terrified by the face of any enemy.

Now, if we will vigorously appear for God against a sinful generation, how many will appear against us? How bitterly will they reproach us; how falsely will they slander us; and say all manner of evil against us? and it is well if we escape

the violence of their hands. And what should be our joy in all these sufferings, but that "great is our reward in heaven." (Matt. v. 12.)

Alas ! how are we continually here annoyed by the presence, and the motions, and the success of sin in ourselves and others. It dwelleth in us night and day ; we cannot get it to stay behind ; no, not when we address ourselves to God ; not in our public worship, or our secret prayers ; not for the space of one Lord's day, or one sermon, or one sacrament, in ordinary or extraordinary duty. O, what a blessed day and duty would it be, in which we could leave our sin behind us, and converse with God in spotless innocency, and worship and adore him without that darkness, and strangeness, and unbelief, and dullness, and doubtings, and distractions, that are now our daily miseries. Can we have grace, and not be weary of these corruptions ? Can we have life, and not be pained with these diseases ? And can we live in daily pain and weariness, and not be willing of release ? Is there a gracious soul that groaneth not under the burden of these miseries ? Yea, in every prayer, what do we else but confess them, and lament them, and groan for help and for deliverance ? And yet shall we fear our day of freedom, and be loth that death should bring us news that our prayers are heard, and our groans have reached up to heaven ; and that the bonds of flesh and sin shall be dissolved, and we shall have need to watch, and strive, and fear, and complain, and sigh, and weep no more ? Shall the face of death discourage us from desiring such a blessed day, when we have so full assurance that, at last, this enemy also shall be destroyed ? The Lord heal and pardon the hypocrisy of our complaints, together with the unbelief and cowardliness of our souls. Do we speak so much, and hear so much, and seem to do so much against sin, and yet had we rather keep it still than be stripped of it, together with the rags of our mortality ? And yet had we rather dwell with sin, in tempting, troubling, corruptible flesh, than lay them by, and dwell with Christ ? O Lord, how lamentably have we lost our wisdom, and drowned our minds in flesh and folly, by forsaking thee our light and life ! How come our reasonable souls to be so bewitched, as, after all our convictions, complaints, and prayers, to be still more willing of our sickness than of the remedy, and more afraid of this bitter cup than of the poison that lodgeth in our bowels, which it would expel ; and that after all the labour we have used, we had yet rather dwell with our greatest

enemy, than, by a less, to be transmitted to our dearest friend ; and had rather continue in a troublesome, weary, restless life, than by the sleep of death to pass to rest.

And this sin, in others also, is our trouble, though not so much as in ourselves. It maketh those our bitter enemies, whose good we most desire and endeavour, and causeth the unthankful world to requite us with malicious usage, for telling them the ungrateful truth, and seeking their salvation ; it makes our friends to be but half friends, and some of them too like our enemies. It puts a sting into the sweetest friendship, and mixeth smart with all our pleasures ; it worketh us grief from precious mercies, and abateth the comfort of our near relations ; so that our smart by the pricks is often greater than our pleasure in the sweetness of the rose. No friend is so smoothed and squared to the temper and interest of another, but that some inequality and unevenness doth remain, which makes the closure to be less near and steadfast. Even family relations are usually so imperfectly jointed and cemented, that when the winds of trial are anything high, they shake the frame ; and though they are but low, they find an entrance, and cause such a coldness of affections as is contrary to the nature and duty of the relations. Either a contrariety of opinions, or of natural temperature and humours, or else of the dispositions of the mind. Sometimes cross interests, and sometimes passions and cross words, do cause such discontents and sourness, such frowns, or jealousies, or distances, that our nearest friends are but as sackcloth on our skins, and as a shoe too strait for us, or as a garment that is unmeet, which pinch and trouble us in their use ; and those that should be to us as the apple of our eyes, are as the dust or smoke to them that vex or blind them : and the more we love them, the more it grieveth us to be crossed in our love. There is scarce any friend so wise, so good, so suitable to us, or so near, that we can always please. And the displeasure of a friend is as gravel in our shoes, or as nettles in our bed, oftentimes more grievous than the malice of an enemy. There is no such doing as this in heaven, because there is no such guest as sin. We shall love each other far more than we do here, and yet that love shall never be inordinate, nor in the least divert our love from God, but every saint and angel in the society shall be loved with the most chaste and pure affections, in a perfect subordination to the love of God, and so as that God himself in them shall be the chiefest object of that love. It is

there that our friends, being freed from all their imperfections, do neither tempt us to a carnal love, nor have any thing in them to discourage the love that is spiritual and pure. We have here our passionate friends, our self-conceited friends, our unkind, unthankful, selfish friends, our mutable and unfaithful friends, our contentious friends, that are like to enemies. And who have used us more hardly than our friends? But when we come to God, we shall have friends that are like God, that are wholly good, and are participatively turned into love; and having left behind them all that was unclean, and noisome, and troublesome to themselves, they have also cast off all that could be troublesome to us. Our love will be there without suspicions, without interruptions, unkindnesses, and discontents, without disappointments, frustrations, and dissatisfactions: for God himself will fully satisfy us; and we shall love his goodness and glory in his saints, as well as immediately in himself. Our friends are now lost at the turning of a straw. The change of their interest, their company, their opinions, the slanders of backbiters, and misrepresentations of malicious men, can cool their love, and kill their friendship. But heaven is a place of constant love. The love of saints, as all things else, is there eternal, and yet it declineth not with age. It is a world of love that we are hastening to; it is a life of love that we must there live; and a work of love, and perfect love, that we must be there employed in for ever. If here we have a pure, a dear, a faithful friend, that is without false-heartedness and deceit, that loveth us as his own soul, how quickly is he snatched away by death, and leaves us melted into tears, and mourning over his earthly relics, and looking upward with grieved hearts, as the disciples did after their ascending Lord. (Acts i. 9—11.) We are left almost as lifeless by such friends, as the body is left by the departed soul. We have nothing but grief to tell us that we live, and that our souls are not departed with them. We are left in greater lamentation than if we had never known faithful friends. And, alas! how quickly are they gone when once God sees them ripe for heaven, when drones and dullards live much longer. If we see a saint that is clear of judgment, and low in humility, and naked-hearted in sincerity, and that abounds in love to God and man, that is faithful and constant to his friend, and is above the pride and vanities of this world, and doth converse by a life of faith above, and is useful and exemplary in his generation. Alas! how soon is he snatched away;

and we are left in our temptations, repining and murmuring at God, as Jonah, when his gourd was withered, as if the Lord had destinated this world to be the dwelling of unfaithful, worthless men, and envied us the presence of one eminent saint, one faithful friend, and one that (as Moses when he had talked with God) hath a face that shineth with the reflected rays of the heavenly glory, when, indeed, it is because this world is unworthy of them, (Heb. xi. 38,) not knowing their worth, nor how to use them, nor how to make use of them for their good. And because, when they are ripe and mellow for eternity, it is fit that God be served before us, and that heaven have the best, and that be left on earth that is earthly. Must heaven be deprived of its inhabitants? Must a saint that is ripe be kept from Christ, and so long kept from his inheritance, from the company of angels and the face of God, and all, lest we should be displeased, and grudge at God for glorifying those whom he destined to glory before the foundations of the world, and whom he purchased and prepared for glory? Must there be a place empty, and a voice be wanting in the heavenly choir, lest we should miss our friends on earth? Are we not hastening after them at the heels; and do we not hope to live with them for ever; and shall we grudge that they are gone a day, or week, or year, before us? O foolish, unbelieving souls! We mourn for them who are past mourning, and lament for our friends that are gone to rest, when we are left ourselves in a vexatious, restless, howling wilderness, as if it were better to be here. We mourn and weep for the souls that are triumphing in their Master's joy; and yet we say we believe, and hope, and labour, and wait for the same felicity. Shall the happiness of our friends be our sorrow and lamentation? O, did we but see these blessed souls, and where they are, and what they are enjoying, and what they are doing, we should be ashamed to mourn thus for their change! Do you think they would wish themselves again to be on earth? Or would they take it kindly of you if you could bring them down again into this world, though it were to reign in wealth and honour? O! how would they disdain or abhor the motion, unless the commanding will of God did make it a part of their obedience. And shall we grieve that they are not here, when to be here would be their grief?

But thus our lives are filled with griefs. Thus smiles and frowns, desires and denials, hopes and frustrations, endeavours and disappointments, do make a quotidian ague of our lives.

The persons and the things we love do contribute to our sorrows, as well as those we hate. If our friends are bad, or prove unkind, they gall and grieve us while they live: if they excel in holiness, fidelity, and suitableness, the dart that kills them deeply woundeth us; and the sweeter they were to us in their lives, the bitterer to us is their death. We cannot keep mercy, but sin is ready to take it from us, or else to mar it, and turn it into vinegar and gall. And doth not death (accidentally) befriend us, that puts an end to all these troubles, and lands us safe on the celestial shore, and puts us into the bosom of perpetual rest, where all is calm, and the storms and billows that tossed us here shall fear or trouble us no more? And thus death shall make us some recompense at last for the wrong it did us; and the mortal blow shall hurt us less than did the dreadful apparition of it in our forethoughts. Let not our fears, then, exceed the cause: though we fear the pangs and throes of travail, let us withal remember that we shall presently rejoice, and all the holy angels with us, that a soul is born into the world of glory, and death shall gain us much more than it deprived us of.

Direct. 10. The last direction that I shall give you to conquer the enmity of death is this: give up your wills entirely to the will of God, as knowing that his will is your beginning and your end, your safety, your felicity, and rest, in which you should gladly acquiesce. When you think of death, remember who it is that sends it; it is our Father's messenger, and is sent but to execute his will. And can there be any thing in the will of God that his servants should inordinately fear? Doubtless, his will is much safer and better for us than our own: and if, in general, it were offered to our choice, whether all particulars of our lives should be disposed of by God's will, or by ours, common reason might teach us to desire to be rather in God's hands than our own. The fulfilling of his will is the care and business of our lives; and therefore it should be a support and satisfaction to us at our death that it is but the fulfilling of his will. His justice and punishing will is good, though selfishness maketh it ungrateful to the offender. But his children that are dear to him, and taste no evil but that which worketh for their good, have no cause to quarrel at his will. Whatsoever our surest, dearest friends would have us take, or do, or suffer, we are ready to submit to, as being confident they will do nothing for our hurt (if they do but know what is for our good). And shall we not more boldly trust the will of God than of our dear-

est friend? He knows what he hath to do with us, and how he will dispose of us, and whither he will bring us, and his interest in us is more than ours in ourselves; and shall we then disturb him, as if we had to do with an enemy, or one that were evil, and not with love and infinite goodness? It is the will of God that must be the everlasting rest, the heaven, the pleasure of our souls; and shall we now so fear it, and fly from it, as if it were our ruin? Look which way you will through all the world, your souls will never find repose, nor satisfying quietness and content, but in the will of God. Let us, therefore, commit our souls to him, as to a faithful Creator, and desire unfeignedly the fulfilling of his will, and believe that there is no ground of confidence more firm. Abraham may boldly trust his son, his only son, on the will of God; and Christ himself, when he was to drink the bitter cup, submitted his own natural love of life to his Father's will saying, "Not my will, but thine be done." It is a most unworthy abuse of God, that we could be quiet, and rejoice, if our own wills, or our dearest friends, might dispose of our lives, and yet are distressed when they are at the dispose of the will of God.

But, perhaps, you will say, 'It is the error of my own will that hath procured my death: if it had been merely the fruit of the will of God, I could be easily satisfied.' Answ. Wo to us if we had not ground of comfort against the errors of our own wills. When our destruction is of ourselves, our help is of God. So much as is of ourselves in it is evil, but so much as is of God is good. I do not say that you should rest in your own wills, nor in your own ways, but in the will and ways of God. The rod is good, though the fault that makes it necessary be bad. The chastising will is good, though the sinning will be evil; and it is good that is intended to us, and shall be performed in the event.

Object. But how can we rest in the angry, afflicting will of God, when it is this that we must be humbled under; and it is the will of God that is the condemnation of the wicked? Answ. The effect being from a twofold cause (the sinning will of man, and the punishing will of God) is accordingly good as from the latter, and so far should be loved and consented to by all; and evil as from the former, and so may be abhorred. But to the saints there is yet greater consolation. Though affliction is their grief, as it signifieth God's displeasure, and causeth the smart or destruction of the flesh; yet it is their mercy, as it

proceedeth from the love of God, and prepareth them for the greatest mercies. And therefore, seeing God never bringeth evil on them that love him, but what is preparatory to a far greater good, we may well take comfort in our death, that it is our Father's will it should be so.

Use 8. If death shall be conquered as the last enemy, from hence Christians may receive exceeding consolation, as knowing that they have no enemy to their happiness, but such as shall be conquered by Christ ; sooner or later he will overcome them all. Let faith, therefore, foresee the conquest in the conflict ; and let us not, with too much despondency, hang down our heads before any enemy that we know shall be trodden down at last. We have burdensome corruptions, that exercise our graces, and grieve the Spirit, and wrong our Lord ; but all these shall be overcome. Though we have heard, and read, and prayed, and meditated, and yet our sins remain alive, they shall be conquered at last. Our love, and joy, and praise, shall be everlasting ; but our ignorance, and unbelief, and pride, and passion, shall not be everlasting. Our holiness shall be perfected, and have no end ; but our sin shall be abolished, and have an end. Our friends shall abide with us for ever, and the holy love and communion of saints shall be perfected in heaven ; but our enemies shall not abide with us for ever, nor malice follow us to our rest. The wicked have no comforts but what will have an end ; and the forethought of that is sufficient to embitter even the present sweetness. And the godly have no sorrows but such as are of short continuance ; and methinks the foresight of their end should sweeten the present bitter cup, and make our sorrows next to none. We sit weeping now in the midst of manifold afflictions ; but we foresee the day when we shall weep no more, but all tears shall be wiped from our eyes by the tender hand of our merciful Redeemer. We are now afraid of love itself, even of our dear and blessed Father, lest he should hate us, or be angry with us for ever ; but heaven will banish all these fears, when the perfect fruition of the eternal love hath perfected our love. Our doubtings and perplexities of mind are many and grievous, but they will be but short. When we have full possession we shall be past our doubts. Our work is now to pour out our grieved souls into the bosom of some faithful friend, or ease our troubled minds by complaining of our miseries to our faithful pastors, that from them we may have some words of direction

and consolation; but, oh! how different a work is it that we shall have in heaven, where no more complainings shall be heard from our mouths, nor no more sorrow shall possess our hearts? And we shall have no need of men to comfort us; but shall have comfort as naturally from the face of God, as we have light and heat, in the summer, from the sun. When we all make one celestial choir, to sing the praises of the King of Saints, how unlike will that melody be to the broken music of sighs, and groans, and lamentations, which we now take to be almost our best! We are now glad when we can find but words, and groans, and tears, to lament our sin and misery; but then our joy shall know no sorrow, nor our voice any sad and mournful tune. And may we not bear a while the sorrows that shall have so good an end? We shall shortly have laid by the hard, unprofitable, barren hearts, that are now our continual burden and disease. Love not your corruptions, Christians; but yet be patient under the unavoidable relics that offend you; remembering that your conflict will end in conquest, and your faith, and watchfulness, and patience will be put to it but a little while. Who would not enter willingly into the fight, when he may, beforehand, be assured that the field shall be cleared of every enemy? All this must be ascribed to our dear Redeemer. Had not he wrought the conquest, the enemies that vex us would have destroyed us, and the serpent that now doth but bruise our heel, would have bruised our head; and the sorrows that are wholesome, sanctified, and short, would have been mortal, venomous, and endless.

What suffering, then, can be so great in which a believer should not rejoice, when he is, beforehand, promised a gracious end? What though at the present it be not joyous, but grievous (in itself)? We should bear it with patience, when we know that at last it shall bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to all them that are exercised thereby. (Heb. xii. 11.) If we should be always abused, and always unthankfully and unkindly dealt with, or always under the scorns, or slanders, or persecutions of unreasonable men, or always under our poverty and toilsome labours, or always under our pains and pining sicknesses, we might then, indeed, dismiss our comforts. But when we know that it will be but a little while, and that all will end in rest and joy, and that our sorrows are but preparing for those joys; even reason itself is taught by faith

to bid us rejoice in all our tribulations, and to lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. (Heb. xii. 12.) We make nothing to endure a sudden prick, that by blood-letting we may prevent a long disease. The short pain of pulling out a tooth is ordinarily endured to prevent a longer. A woman doth bear the pains of her travail because it is short, and tends to the bringing of a child into the world. Who would not submit to any labour or toil for a day, that he might win a life of plenty and delight by it? Who would not be spit upon, and made the scorn of the world for a day, if he might have his will for it as long as he liveth on earth? And should we not then cheerfully submit to our momentary afflictions, and the troubles of a few days, (which are light, and mixed with a world of mercies,) when we know that they are working for us a far more exceeding, eternal weight of glory? (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Our clamorous and malicious enemies, our quarrelsome brethren, our peevish friends, our burdensome corruptions and imperfections, will shortly trouble us no more. As our life is short, and but a dream and shadow, and therefore the pleasures of this world are no better; so our troubles also will be no longer, and are but sad dreams, and dark shadows, that quickly pass away. Our Lord that hath begun, and gone on so far, will finish his victories, and the last enemy shall shortly be destroyed.

And if the fearful doubting soul shall say, ‘I know this is comfort to them that are in Christ, but what is it to me, that know not whether I have any part in him?’ I answer, 1. The foundation of God still standeth sure; the Lord knoweth his own, even when some of them know not that they are his own. He knoweth his mark upon his sheep, when they know it not themselves. God doubteth not of his interest in thee, though thou doubt of thy interest in him. And thou art faster in the arms of his love, than by the arms of thy own faith; as the child is surer in the mother’s arms than by its holding of the mother. And, moreover, your doubts and fears are part of the evil that shall be removed, and your bitterest sorrows that hence proceed shall with the rest of the enemies be destroyed.

2. But yet take heed that you unthankfully plead not against the mercies which you have received, and be not friends to those doubts and fears which are your enemies, and that you take not part with the enemy of your comforts. Why dost

thou doubt, poor humbled soul, of thy interest in Christ, that must make the conquest? Answer me but these few questions from thy heart.

Quest. 1. Did Christ ever show himself unkind to thee? or unwilling to receive thee, and have mercy on thee? Did he ever give thee cause to think so poorly of his love and grace as thy doubts do intimate thou dost? Hast thou not found him kind when thou wast unkind? and that he thought on thee when thou didst not think on him? And will he now forget thee, and end in wrath that begun in love? He desired thee when thou didst not desire him, and gave thee all thy desires after him: and will he now cross and deny the desires which he hath caused? He was found of thee, (or rather found thee,) when thou soughtest not after him; and can he reject thee now thou criest and callest for his grace? O think not hardly of his wondrous grace till he give thee cause. Let thy sweet experiences be remembered, to the shame of thy causeless doubts and fears; and let him that hath loved thee to the death be thought on as he is, and not as the unbelieving flesh would misrepresent him.

Quest. 2. If thou say that it is not his unkindness, but thy own, that feeds thy doubts, I further ask thee, is he not kind to the unkind, especially when they lament their own unkindness? Thou art not so unkind as thou wast in thy unconverted state, and yet he then expressed his love in thy conversion. He then sought thee when thou wentest astray, and brought thee carefully home into his fold, and there he hath kept thee ever since; and is he less kind now when thou art returned home? Dost thou not know that all his children have their frowardness, and are guilty of their unkindnesses to him? And yet he doth not therefore disown them, and turn them out of his family; but is tender of them in their froward weakness, because they are his own. How dealt he with the peevish prophet Jonah, that was "exceedingly displeased, and very angry," that God spared Nineveh, lest it should be a dishonour to his prophecy, inso-much, that he wished that he might die, and not live; and after repined at the withering of his gourd, and the scorching of the sun that beat upon him? The Lord doth gently question him, "Dost thou well to be angry?" and after hence convinces him that the mercy which he valued to himself he should not envy to so many. (Jonah, iv.) How dealt he with the disciples that fell asleep, when they should have watched with Christ in

the night of his great agony? He doth not tell them, 'You are none of mine, because you could not watch with me one hour,' but tenderly excuseth that which they durst not excuse themselves. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." When he was on the cross, though "they all forsook him and fled," he was then so far from forsaking them, that he was manifesting to admiration that exceeding love that never would forsake them. And knowest thou not, poor, complaining soul! that the kindness of Christ overcometh all the unkindness of his children? And that his blood and grace is sufficient to save thee from greater sins than those that trouble thee? If thou hadst no sin, what use hadst thou for a Saviour? Will thy physician, therefore, cast thee off because thou art sick?

Quest. 3. Yea, hath not Christ already subdued so many of thy enemies as may assure thee he will subdue the rest? and begun that life in thee which may assure thee of eternal life? Once thou wast a despiser of God and his holy ways; but now it is far otherwise with thee. Hath he not broken the heart of thy pride, and worldliness, and sensuality, and made thee a new creature? And is not this a pledge that he will do the rest? Tell me plainly, hadst thou rather keep thy sin, or leave it? Hadst thou rather have liberty to commit it, or be delivered from it? Dost thou not hate it, and set thyself against it as thy enemy? Art thou not delivered from the reign and tyranny of it, which thou wast once under? And will he not perfect the conquest which he hath begun? He that hath thus far delivered thee from sin, thy greatest enemy, will deliver thee from all the sad effects of it. The blessed work of the Spirit in thy conversion did deliver thee from the bondage of the devil, from the power of darkness, and translated thee into the kingdom of Jesus Christ; then didst thou enter the holy warfare under his banners that was never overcome, in the victorious army that shall shortly begin their everlasting triumph. The sin which thou hatest, and longest to be delivered from, and art willing to use God's means against it, is the conquered enemy, which may assure thee of a full and final conquest, supposing that thy hatred is against all known sin, and that there is none so sweet or profitable in thy account which thou hadst not far rather leave than keep.

Quest. 4. Moreover, art thou not truly willing to yield to all the terms of grace? Thou hast heard of the yoke and burden

of Christ, and of the conditions of the gospel, on which peace is offered to the sinful world, and what Christ requireth of such as will be his disciples. What saith thy heart now to those terms? Do they seem so hard and grievous to thee, that thou wilt venture thy soul in thy state of sin, rather than accept of them? If this were so, thou hadst yet no part in Christ indeed. But if there be nothing that Christ requireth of thee that is not desirable in thy eyes, or which thou dost not stick at, so far as to turn away from him, and forsake him, and refuse his covenant and grace, rather than submit to such conditions, thou art then in covenant with him, and the blessings of the covenant belong to thee. Canst thou think that Christ hath purchased, and offered, and promised that which he will not give? Hath he sent forth his ministers, and commanded them to make the motion in his name, and to invite and compel men to come in, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God, and that yet he is unwilling to accept thee when thou dost consent? If Christ had been unwilling, he had not so dearly made the way, nor begun as a suitor to thy soul, nor so diligently sought thee as he hath done. If the blessings of the covenant are thine, then heaven is thine, which is the chiefest blessing? And if they be not thine, it is not because Christ is unwilling, but because thou art unwilling of his blessings on his terms. Nothing can deprive thee of them but thy refusal. Know, therefore, assuredly whether thou dost consent thyself to the terms of Christ, and whether thou art truly willing that he be thy Saviour; and if thy conscience bear thee faithful witness that it is so, dishonour not Christ, then, so far as to question whether he be willing, who hath done so much to put it out of doubt. The stop is at thy will, and not at his. If thou know that thou art willing, thou mayest know that Christ and his benefits are thine; and if thou be not willing, what makes thee wish, and groan, and pray, and labour in the use of means? Is it not for Christ and his benefits that thy heart thus worketh, and thou dost all this? Fear not, then, if thy own hand be to the covenant, it is most certain that the hand of Christ is at it.

Quest. 5. Moreover, I would ask thee, whether thou see not a beauty in holiness, which is the image of Christ, and whether thy soul do not desire it even in perfection? So that thou hadst rather, if thou hadst thy choice, be more holy than more rich or honourable in the world. If so, be assured that it is not without holiness that thou chooseth and preferrest holiness.

Hadst thou not rather have more faith, and hope, and love to God, and patience and contentment, and communion with Christ, than have more of the favour and applause of man, or of the riches or pleasures of this world? If so, I would know of thee whether this be not from the Spirit of Christ within thee; and be not his image itself upon thee? And the motions of the new and heavenly nature, which is begotten in thee by the Holy Ghost? Undoubtedly it is. And the Spirit of Christ thus dwelling in thee is the earnest of thy inheritance. Dost thou find the Spirit of Christ thus working in thee, causing thee to love holiness, and hate all sin, and yet canst thou doubt of thy part in Christ?

Quest. 6. Moreover, canst thou not truly say, that Christ's friends so far as thou knowest them, are thy friends, and that which is against him thou takest as against thyself? If so, undoubtedly thy enemies also are to him as his enemies, and he will lay them at thy feet. Thy troubles are as his troubles; and in all thy afflictions he is as careful of thy good as if he himself were thereby afflicted. Fear not those enemies that Christ takes as his own. It is he that is engaged to overcome them.

And now when conscience itself beareth witness that thus it is with thy soul, and that thou wouldest fain be what God would have thee be, and desirest nothing than to be more like him, and nearer to him, and desirest no kind of life so much as that in which thou mayest be most serviceable to him; consider what a wrong it is, then, to Christ, and to the honour of his covenant and grace, and to thy poor, dejected soul, that thou shouldest lie questioning his love, and thy part in him, and looking about for matter of accusation, or causeless suspicion, against his Spirit working in thee; and that thou shouldest cast away the joy of the Lord, which is thy strength, and gratify the enemy of thy peace. When sickness is upon thee, and death draws nigh, thou shouldest then, with joy, lift up thy head, because thy warfare is almost accomplished, and thy Saviour ready to deliver thee the crown. Is this a time to fear and mourn, when thou art entering into endless joy? Is it a time of lamentation, when thou art almost at thy journey's end, ready to see thy Saviour's face, and to take thy place in the heavenly Jerusalem, amongst those millions of holy souls that are gone before thee? Is it seemly for thee to lament thus at the door, when they are feasted with such

inconceivable joys within? Dost thou know what thy brethren are now enjoying, and what the heavenly host are doing? How full they are of God, and how they are ravished with his light and love? And canst thou think it seemly to be so unlike them that are passing to them? I know there is such difference between imperfection and perfection, and between earth and heaven, that it justifieth our moderate sorrows, and commandeth us to take up infinitely short of their delights, till we are with them. But yet let there not be too great a disproportion between the members of Jesus Christ. We have the same Lord, and the same Spirit; and all that is theirs in possession is, in right and title, ours. They are our elder brethren, and, being at age, have possession of the inheritance; but we that are yet in the lap of the church on earth, our mother, and in the arms of our father's grace, are of the same family, and have the same nature in our low degree. They were once on earth as low as we, and we shall be shortly in heaven as high as they: am I now in flesh, in fears, in griefs? So was David, and Paul, and all the saints, a while ago; yea, and Christ himself. Am I beset with sin, and compassed with infirmities, and racked by my own distempered passion? So were the many saints now glorified; but the other day, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." (James v. 17.) Am I maliced by dissenting adversaries? Do they privily lay snares for me, and watch my halting, and seek advantage against my name, and liberty, and life? So did they by David, and many others, now with Christ. But now these enemies are overcome. Art thou under pains, and consuming sicknesses? Are thine eyes held waking; and doth trouble and sorrow waste thy spirits? Doth thy flesh and thy heart fail thee, and thy friends prove silly comforters to thee? So was it with those thousands that are now in heaven, where the night of calamities is past, and the just have dominion in the morning; and glory hath banished all their griefs, and joys have made them forget their sorrows; unless as the remembrance of them doth promote these joys. Are thy friends lamenting thee, and grieved to see the signs of thy approaching death? Do they weep when they see thy pale face, and consumed body, and when they hear thy sighs and groans? Why thus it was once with the millions that are now triumphing with their Lord? They lay in sickness, and underwent the pains, and were lamented by their friends, as

thou art now. Even Christ himself was once in his agony, and some shook the head at him, and others pitied him, who should rather have wept for themselves, than for him. This is but the passage from the womb of mortality into the life of immortality, which all the saints have passed before thee that are now with Christ. Dost thou fear the dreadful face of death? Must thy tender flesh be turned to rottenness and dust? And must thou lie in darkness till the resurrection, and thy body remain as the common earth? And is not this the case of all those millions, whose souls now see the face of Christ? Did they not lie as thou must, and die as thou must, and pass by death to the life which they have now attained? Oh! then commit thy soul to Christ, and be quiet and comforted in his care and love. Trust him as the midwife of thy departing soul, who shall bring it safe into the light and life which thou art yet such a stranger to. But it is not strange to him, though it be strange to thee.

What was it that rejoiced thee all thy life, in thy prayers, and sufferings, and labours? Was it not the hopes of heaven? And was heaven the spring and motive of thy obedience, and the comfort of thy life? And yet wilt thou pass into it with heaviness? And shall thy approaches to it be thy sorrows? Didst thou pray for that which thou wouldest not have? Hast thou laboured for it, and denied thyself the pleasures of the world for it, and now art thou afraid to enter in? Fear not, poor soul! Thy Lord is there; thy husband, and thy head, and life is there, thou hast more there, a thousand-fold more, than thou hast here. Here thou must leave poor mourning friends, that languish in their own infirmities, and troubled thee as well as comforted thee while thou wast with them, and that are hastening after thee, and will shortly overtake thee. But there thou shalt find the souls of all the blessed saints that have lived since the creation till this age. That are all unclothed of the rags of their mortality, and have laid by their frailties with their flesh, and are made up of holiness, and prepared for joy, and will be suitable companions for thee in thy joys. Why shouldest thou be afraid to go the way that all the saints have gone before thee? Where there is one on earth, how many are there in heaven? And one of them is worth many of us. Art thou better than Noah, and Abraham, and David? than Peter, and Paul, and all the saints? Or dost thou not love their names, and wouldest thou

not be with them? Art thou loth to leave thy friends on earth? and hast thou not far better and more in heaven? Why then art thou not as loth to stay from them? Suppose that I, and such as I, were the friends that thou art loth to leave; what if we had died long before thee? If it be our company that thou lovest, thou shouldest then be willing to die, that thou mayest be with us. And if so, why then shouldest thou not be more willing to die, and be with Christ, and all his holy ones, that are so much more excellent than we? Wouldest thou have our company? Remove, then, willingly to that place where thou shalt have it to everlasting; and be not so loth to go from hence, where neither thou nor we can stay. Hadst thou rather travel with us, than dwell here with us? And rather here suffer with us, than reign in heaven with Christ and us?

Oh! what a brutish thing is flesh! What an unreasonable thing is unbelief! Shall we believe, and fly from the end of our belief? Shall we hope, and be loth to enjoy our hopes? Shall we desire and pray, and be afraid of attaining our desires, and lest our prayers should be heard? Shall we spend our lives in labour and travel, and be afraid of coming to our journey's end? Do you love life, or do you not? If not, why are you afraid of death? If you do, why then are you loth to pass into everlasting life? You know there is no hope of immortality on earth. Hence you must pass whether you will or not, as all your fathers have done before you; it is therefore in heaven, or nowhere, that endless life is to be had. If you can live here for ever, do. Hope for it, if any have done so before you. Go to some man of a thousand years old, and ask him how he made shift to draw out his life so long. But if you know that man walketh here in a vain show, and that his life is a shadow, a dream, a post; and that all these things shall be dissolved, and the fashion of them passeth away; is it not more reasonable that we should set our hearts on the place where there is hopes of our continuance, than where there is none? And where we must live for ever, than where we must be but for so short a time?

Alas! poor darkened, troubled soul! Is the presence of Christ less desirable in thy eyes than the presence of such sinful worms as we, whom thou art loth to part with? Is it more grievous to thee to be absent from us, than from thy Lord? from earth, than from heaven; from sinners, than from blessed

saints ; from trouble and frailty, than from glory ? Hast thou any thing here that thou shalt want in heaven ? Alas, that we should thus draw back from happiness, and follow Christ so heavily and sadly into life ! But all this is along of the enemies that now molest our peace. Indwelling sin, and a flattering world, and a brutish flesh, and interposing death, are our discouragements that drive us back. But all these enemies shall shortly be overcome.

Fear not death, then, let it do its worst. It can give thee but one deadly gripe that shall kill itself, and prove thy life ; as the wasp that leaves its sting behind, and can sting no more. It shall but snuff the candle of thy life, and make it shine brighter when it seems to be put out ; it is but an undressing, and a gentle sleep. That which thou couldest not here attain by all our preaching, and all thy prayers, and cares, and pains, thou shalt speedily attain by the help of death. It is but the messenger of thy gracious Lord, and calleth thee to him, to the place that he hath prepared.

Hearken not now to the great deceiver that would draw thee to unbelief, and cause thee to stagger at the promises of God, when thou hast followed him so far, and they are near to the full performance. Believe it as sure as thou believest that the sun doth shine upon thee, that God cannot lie : he is no deceiver. It was his mere love and bounty that caused him to make the promises, when he had no need for himself to make them. And shall he be then unfaithful, and not fulfil the promises which he hath freely made ? Believe it, faith is no delusion : it may be folly to trust man ; but it is worse than folly not to trust God. Believe it, heaven is not a shadow, nor the life of faith and holiness a dream. These sensible things have least reality ; these grosser substances are most drossy, delusory, and base. God is a spirit, who is the prime being, and the cause of all created beings : and the angels, and other celestial inhabitants that are nearest to him, are furthest from corporeity, and are spirits likest unto God. The further any thing is from spirituality, the further from that excellency and perfection which the creatures nearest God partake of ; the earth is baser than the air and fire ; the drossy flesh is baser than the soul ; and this lumpish, dirty, visible world, is incomparably below that spiritual world which we believe and wait for. And though thy conceptions of spirits, and the spiritual world, are low and dark, and much unsatisfying, remember still that thy Head is there ;

and it belongeth to him to know what thou shalt be, till thou art fit to know it, which will not be till thou art fit to enjoy it. Be satisfied that thy Father is in heaven, and that thy Lord is there ; and that the Spirit that hath been so long at work within thee, preparing thee for it, dwelleth there. And let it suffice thee, that Christ knoweth what he will do with thee, and how he will employ thee to all eternity. And thou shalt very shortly see his face, and in his light thou shalt behold that light that shall fully satisfy thee, and shame all thy present doubts and fears ; and if there were shame in heaven, would shame thee for them.

Use 9. From the enmity of death, and the necessity of a conquest, we may see what a wonderful mercy the resurrection of Christ himself was to the church, and what use we should make of it for the strengthening of our faith. It was not only impossible to man to conquer death by his own strength, and therefore it must be conquered by Christ ; but it was also beyond our power to believe it, that ever the dead should rise to life, if Christ had not risen as the first-fruits, and convinced man, by eyesight, or certain testimony, that the thing is possible, and already done. But now what a pillar is here for faith : what a word of hope and joy is this, that Christ is risen. With this we will answer a thousand cavils of the tempter, and stop the mouth of the enemies of our faith, and put to flight our infidelity. As unlikely as it seems to flesh and blood, shall we ever doubt whether we shall rise again, when the Lord came down in flesh among us, that he might die and rise again himself, to show us as to our faces that we shall rise ? This is the very gospel which we preach, and by which we must be saved ; “ That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures ; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve ; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remained alive ” when Paul wrote this, who was the last that saw him. (1 Cor. xv. 1—6.) Read over this chapter again and again, where our resurrection is proved by the resurrection of Christ.

No wonder, therefore, that the church, in all ages, ever since the very day of Christ’s resurrection, hath kept the first day of the week as a holy festival in remembrance of it. Wherein, though they commemorated the whole work of our redemption, yet was it from the resurrection as the most glorious part that

the Spirit of Christ did choose the day. This hath been the joyful day to the church this 1625 years, or thereabouts; in which the ancient Christians would assemble themselves together, saluting one another with this joyful word, "The Lord is risen." And this is the day that the Lord hath blessed with the new birth and resurrection of millions of souls; so that it is most probable that all the six days of the week have not begot half so many souls for heaven, as this blessed day of the Lord's resurrection hath done. Let infidels, then, despise it, that believe not Christ's resurrection; but let it still be the church's joyful day. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes: this is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm cxviii. 23, 24.) In it "Let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." (Psalm xcv. 1, 2.) Every day let us remember the Lord's resurrection; but on this day let the joyful commemoration of it be our work.

We may see by the witness of the apostles, and their frequent preaching the resurrection of Christ, as if it were the sum of all the gospel, that this is a point that faith must especially build and feed upon, and that we must make the matter of our most frequent meditations. Oh, what vigour it addeth to our faith, when we are encountered by the sight of death, and of a grave, to remember seriously that "Christ is risen." Did he take flesh purposely that he might die and rise, and show us how he will raise his members? And will he, after all this, break his promise, and leave us in the dust for ever? It cannot be. Hath he conquered death for himself alone, and not for us? Hath he taken our nature into heaven, to be there alone, and will he not have all his members with him? Remember, then, Christian, when thou lookest on thy grave, that Christ was buried, and hath made the grave a bed of rest, that shall give up her trust when his trumpet sounds; and that his resurrection is the pledge of ours. Keep, therefore, thy rising and glorified Lord continually in thy eye. If Christ were not risen, our preaching were vain, and your faith were vain, and all men were miserable, but we most miserable that suffer so much for a life which we had no ground to hope for. (1 Cor. xv. 14, 17, 19.) But now we have an argument that infidelity itself is ashamed to encounter with; that hath been the means of the conversion of

the nations unto Christ; by which we may put even death itself to a defiance, as knowing it is now a conquered thing. If it could have held Christ captive, it might also have held us. But he being risen, we shall surely rise. Write it, therefore, Christians, upon your hearts; mention it more in your conference for the encouragement of your faith; write it on the grave-stones of your friends that "CHRIST IS RISEN," and that "BECAUSE HE LIVETH, WE SHALL LIVE ALSO," and that "OUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD," though we are dead, and when he shall appear who is our life, we shall also appear with him in glory. (John xiv. 19; Col. iii. 3, 4.) Though we must be sown in corruption, in weakness, and dishonour, we shall be raised in incorruption, strength, and honour. (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.) While our souls behold the Lord in glory, we may bear with the winter that befalls our flesh till the spring of resurrection come. "Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus—for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day—while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 14, 16, 18.) As we are risen with Christ to newness of life, so we shall rise with him to glory.

Use 10. Lastly, if death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn hence how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full and final conquest shall be made. Death shall do much for us, but the resurrection shall do more. Death sends the separated soul to Christ, but at his coming both soul and body shall be glorified. There is somewhat in death that is penal, even to believers, but in the coming of Christ, and their resurrection, there is nothing but glorifying grace. Death is the effect of sin, and of the first sentence passed upon sinners, but the resurrection of the just is the final destruction of the effects of sin. And, therefore, though the fears of death may perplex us, methinks we should long for the coming of Christ, there being nothing in that but what tends to the deliverance and glory of the saints. Whether he will come before the general resurrection, and reign on earth a thousand years, which some expect, I shall not presume to pass my determination. But sure I am, it is the work of faith, and character of his people, to "love his appearing," (2 Tim. iv. 8),

“and to wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thess. i. 10.) And to wait “for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. i. 7.) And to wait “for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies,” with inward groanings. (Rom. viii. 23.) Oh! therefore, let us pray more earnestly for the coming of our Lord! And that “the Lord would direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” (2 Thess. iii. 5.) O blessed day, when that glorious appearing of our Lord shall put away all his servants’ shame, and shall communicate glory to his members, even to the bodies that had lain so long in dust, that to the eye of flesh there seemed to be no hope. Though the majesty and glory will cause our reverence, yet it will not be our terror, to the diminution of our joy. It is his enemies that would not have him rule over them, whom he cometh to destroy. (Luke xix. 27.) “Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him;” as Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied. (Jude, verses 14, 15.) But the precious faith of the saints shall “be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. i. 7.) “When the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” (1 Pet. v. 4.) He that was once offered to bear the sins of many, and now appeareth for us in the presence of God, shall, unto them that look for him, appear the second time, without sin, to salvation. (Heb. ix. 24, 28.) And “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.” (Col. iii. 4.) The Lord shall then “come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day.” (2 Thess. i. 10.) This is the day that all believers should long, and hope, and wait for, as being the accomplishment of all the work of their redemption, and all the desires and endeavours of their souls. It is the hope of this day that animateth the holy diligence of our lives, and makes us turn from the carelessness and sensuality of the world. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for that

blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit. ii. 11—13.) "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." And though the Lord seem to delay, he is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: for a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. iii. 7—13.)

Beza marvelleth at Tertullian for saying that the Christians in their holy assemblies prayed *pro mora finis*, (Apologet. c. 39;) and so he might well enough, if it were not that to Christians the glory of God is dearer than their own felicity, and the salvation of millions more precious than the mere hastening of their own; and the glory of the church more desirable than our personal glory, and the hallowing of God's name were not to be prayed for before the coming of his kingdom, and the kingdom of grace must not necessarily go before the kingdom of glory. But as much as we long for the coming of our Lord, we are content to wait till the elect be gathered; and can pray that he will delay it, till the universal body be made up, and all are called that shall be glorified. But to ourselves that are brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, how desirable is the promised land. When we think on our own interest, we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." The sooner the better. Then shall our eyes behold him, in whom we have believed: not as he was beheld on earth in his despised state; but as the glorious King of Saints, accompanied with the celestial host, coming in flaming fire to render vengeance to the rebellious, and rest and joy to believing souls, that waited for this day of his appearance. Then faith and patience shall give up their work; and sight, and fruition, and perfect love, shall everlastingly succeed them. The rage of persecutors shall no more

affright us; the folly of the multitude shall no more annoy us; the falseness of our seeming, selfish friends shall no more betray us; the pride of self-conceited men shall no more disturb us; the turbulency of men distracted by ambition shall cast us no more into confusions; the kingdom that we shall possess shall not be liable to mutations, nor be tossed with pride and faction as are these below. There is no monthly (or annual) change of governors and laws, as is in lunatic commonwealths; but there will be the same Lord and King, and the same laws and government, and the same subjects and obedience, without any mutinies, rebellions, or discontents, to all eternity. The church of which we shall then be members, shall not be divided into parties and factions, nor the members look strangely at each other, because of difference of opinions, or distance of affections, as now we find it, to our daily grief, in the militant church. We shall then need no tedious debates to reconcile us. Unity will be then quickly and easily procured. There will be no falling out in the presence of our Lord. There will be none of that darkness, uncharitableness, selfishness, or passion left, that now causeth our dissensions. When we have perfect light, and perfect love, the perfect peace will be easily attained, which here we labour for in vain. Now there is no peace in church or state, in cities or countries, in families, or scarce in our own souls. But when the glorious King of Peace hath put all his enemies under his feet, what then is left to make disturbance? Our enemies can injure us no more, for it is then their portion to suffer for all their former injuries to Christ and us: our friends will not injure us, (as here they do,) because their corruption and weakness is put off, and the relics of sin that caused the trouble are left behind. Oh, that is the sight that faith prepareth for, that is the day, the blessed day, that all our days are spent in seeking, and waiting, and praying for; then shall the glory of holiness appear, and the wisdom of the saints be justified by all, that now is justified by her children. Then it shall be known, whether faith or unbelief, whether a heavenly or earthly mind and life was the wiser and more justifiable course. Then shall all the world “discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” (Mal. iii. 18.) Then sin (that is now so obstinately defended and justified by such foolish cunning) shall never more find a tongue to plead for it, or a patron to defend it more. Then where is the man that will

stand forth and break a jest at godliness, or make a scorn of the holy diligence of believers? How pale then will those faces look that here were wont to jeer at piety! What terror will seize upon those hearts that here were wont to make themselves sport at the weaknesses of the upright servants of the Lord! That is the day that shall rectify all judgments, and cure the errors and contemptuous thoughts of an holy life, which no persuasions now can cure; that is the day that shall set all straight that now seems crooked; and shall satisfy us to the full that God was just, even when he prospered his enemies, and afflicted the souls that loved him, and walked in their integrity before him. We shall then see that which shall fully satisfy us of the reason and equity of all our sufferings which here we underwent; we shall marvel no more that God lets us weep, and groan, and pray, and turns away his face, and seems not to regard us. We shall then find that all our groans were heard, and all our tears and prayers did succeed, which we suspected had been lost. We shall then find that a duty performed in sincerity, through all our lives, was never lost; no, nor a holy thought, nor a "cup of cold water," that, from holy love, we gave to a disciple. We shall then see that our murmurings, and discontents, and jealous, unbelieving thoughts of God, which sickness, or poverty, or crosses did occasion, were all injurious to the Lord, and the fruit of infirmity; and that when we questioned his love on such accounts we knew not what we said. We shall then see that death, and grave, and devils, were all but matter for the glorifying of grace, and for the triumph of our Lord and us.

Up, then, my soul, and shake off thy unbelief and dulness. Look up, and long, and meet thy Lord. The more thou art afraid of death, the more desire that blessed day, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and the name of death shall be terrible no more. Though death be thy enemy, there is nothing but friendly in the coming of thy Lord. Though death dissolve thy nature, the resurrection shall restore it, and make thee full reparation, with advantage.

How glad would I have been to have seen Christ but with the wise men in the manger, or to have seen him disputing with the doctors in his childhood in the temple, or to have seen him do his miracles, or heard him preach, much more to have seen him as the three disciples, in his transfiguration, or to have seen him after his resurrection, and when he ascended up to heaven. But

how far is all this below the sight that we shall have of him when he comes in glory; when the brightness of his shining face shall make us think the sun was in darkness, and the glory of his attendants shall make us think what a sordid thing, and childish foolery was all the glory of this world. The face of love shall be then unveiled, and ravish us into the highest love and joy that our natures are capable of. Then doubt, and fear, and grieve, if thou canst! What, then, wilt thou think of all these disquieting, distrustful thoughts that now so wrong thy Lord and thee? If going into the sanctuary, and foreseeing the end, can cure our brutish misapprehensions of God's providences, (Psalm lxxiii. 17,) how perfectly will they be cured when we see the glorious face of Christ, and behold the new Jerusalem in its glory, and when we are numbered with the saints that judge the world. We shall never more be tempted, then, to condemn the generation of the just, nor to think it vain to serve the Lord, nor to envy the prosperity of the wicked, nor to stagger at the promise through unbelief, nor to think that our sickness, death, and grave, were any signs of unkindness or unmercifulness in God. We shall then be convinced that sight and flesh were unfit to censure the ways of God, or to be our guides.

Hasten, O Lord, this blessed day! Stay not till faith have left the earth, and infidelity, and impiety, and tyranny have conquered the rest of thine inheritance! Stay not till selfish, uncharitable pride hath vanquished love and self-denial, and planted its colonies of heresy, confusion, and cruelty, in thy dominions, and earth and hell be turned into one. Stay not till the eyes of thy servants fail, and their hearts and hopes do faint and languish with looking and waiting for thy salvation. But if yet the day be not at hand, oh, keep up faith, and hope, and love, till the sun of perfect love arise, and time hath prepared us for eternity, and grace for glory.

SOME IMITABLE PASSAGES

OF THE

Life of Elizabeth, late wife of Mr. Joseph Baker.

THOUGH I spoke so little as was next to nothing, of our dear deceased friend, it was not because I wanted matter, or thought it unmeet; but I use it but seldom, lest I raise expectations of the like, where I cannot conscionably perform it. But he that hath promised to honour those that serve and honour him, (John xii. 26; 1 Sam. ii. 30,) and will come at last “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,” (2 Thess. i. 10,) I know will take it as a great and acceptable act of service, to proclaim the honour of his grace, and to give his servants their due on earth, whose souls are glorified with Christ in heaven, though serpentine enmity will repine, and the envious accuser.

It is not the history of the life of this precious servant of the Lord which I intend to give you, (for I was not many years acquainted with her,) but only some passages, which, either upon my certain knowledge, or her own diurnal of her course, or the most credible testimony of her most intimate, judicious, godly friends, I may boldly publish as true and imitable in this untoward, distempered generation.

She was born November, 1634, in Southwark, near London, the only child of Mr. John Godeschalk, *alias* Godscall. Her father dying in her childhood, she was left an orphan to the Chamber of London. Her mother after married Mr. Isaac Barton, with whom she had the benefit of religious education: but between sixteen and seventeen years of age, by the serious reading of the book called “The Saints’ Everlasting Rest,” she was more thoroughly awakened, and brought to set her heart on God, and to seek salvation with her chiefest care. From that time forward she was a more constant, diligent, serious hearer of the ablest ministers in London, rising early, and going far to hear them on the week days; waiting on God for his confirming

grace in the use of those ordinances, which empty, inexperienced hypocrites are easily tempted to despise. The sermons, which she constantly wrote, she diligently repeated at home, for the benefit of others ; and every week read over some of those that she had heard long before, that the fruit of them might be retained and renewed ; it being not novelty that she minded.

In the year 1654, being near one-and-twenty years of age, after seeking God, and waiting for his resolving, satisfying directions, she consented to be joined in marriage to Mr. Joseph Baker, by the approbation of her nearest friends, God having taken away her mother the year before. With him she approved herself, indeed, such a wife as Paul (no papist) describeth as meet for a bishop or pastor of the church ; “even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.” (1 Tim. iii. 11.) Some instances I shall give for the imitation of others.

1. She was very exemplary in self-denial and humility : and having said thus much, what abundance have I comprehended ! Oh, what a beauty doth self-denial and humility put on souls ! Nay, what a treasure of everlasting consequence doth these two words express ! I shall give you a few of the discoveries.

1. It appeared in her accompanying in London with the holiest, how mean soever, avoiding them that were proud, and vain, and carnal. She desired most to be acquainted with those that she perceived were best acquainted with God, neglecting the pomp and vain-glory of the world.

2. When she was called to a married state, though her portion, and other advantages, invited persons of greater estates in the world, she chose rather to marry a minister of known integrity, that might be a near and constant guide, stay, and comfort to her in the matters which she valued more than riches. And she missed not of her expectations for the few years that she lived with him. Even in this age, when the serpent is hissing in every corner at faithful ministers, and they are contemned both by profane and heretical malignants, she preferred a mean life with such a one, for her spiritual safety and solace, before the grandeur of the world.

3. When some inhabitants of the city of Worcester were earnest with me to help them to an able minister, Mr. Baker, then living in Kent, had about a hundred pounds per annum : and when, at my motion, he was readily willing to take a great charge in Worcester, upon a promise from two men to make the

maintenance fifty pounds a year, by a voluntary contribution, of the continuance of which he had no security, his wife was the promoter, and no discourager, of his self-denial, and never tempted him to look after greater things. And afterward, when I was afraid lest the smallness and uncertainty of the means, together with his discouragements from some of his people, might have occasioned his remove, and have heard of richer places mentioned to him, as he still answered that he had enough, and minded not removing without necessity, so was she ever of the same mind, and still seconded and confirmed him in such resolutions, even to follow God's work while they had a competency of their own, and to mind no more.

4. Her very speech and behaviour did so manifest meekness and humility, that, in a little converse with her, it might easily be discerned.

5. She thought nothing too mean for her that belonged to her in her family and relation, no employment, food, &c., saying often, that 'What God had made her duty was not too low a work for her.' And, indeed, when we know once that it is a work that God sets us upon, it signifieth much forgetfulness of him and ourselves, if we think it too base, or think ourselves too good to stoop to it.

6. No neighbour did seem too mean or poor for her familiar converse, if they were but willing.

7. She had a true esteem and cheerful love for the meanest of her husband's relations, and much rejoiced in her comfort in his kindred, recording it among her experienced mercies.

II. She was very constant and diligent in doing her part of family duties; teaching all the inferiors of her family, and labouring to season them with principles of holiness, and admonishing them of their sin and danger: never failing, on the Lord's day at night, to hear them read the Scriptures and recite their catechisms, when public duty, and all other family duty, was ended, and, in her husband's absence, praying with them. How much the imitation of such examples would conduce to the sanctifying of families is easy to be apprehended.

III. In secret duty she was very constant, and lived much in those two great soul-advancing works, meditation and prayer, in which she would not admit of interruptions. This inward, holy diligence was it that maintained spiritual life within, which is the spring of outward acceptable works. When communion with God, and daily labour upon our own hearts, is laid aside, or

negligently and remissly followed, grace languisheth first within, and then unfruitfulness, if not disorders and scandals, appear without.

IV. Her love to the Lord Jesus was evidenced by her great affection to his ordinances, and ways, and servants. A very hearty love she manifested to those on whom the image of God did appear, even the poorest and meanest, as well as the rich or eminent in the world. Nor did a difference in lesser matters, or any tolerable mistakes, alienate her affections from them.

V. She was a Christian of much plainness, simplicity, and singleness of heart. Far from a subtle, crafty, dissembling frame, and also from loquacity, or ostentation. And the world was very low in her eyes, to which she was long crucified, and on which she looked as a lifeless thing. Sensuality, and pampering the flesh, she much loathed. When she was invited to feasts she would oft complain that they occasioned a difficulty in maintaining a sense of the presence of God, whose company in all her company she preferred.

VI. She was a very careful esteemer and redeemer of her time. At home in her family the works of her general and particular calling took her up. When necessary business, and greater duties, gave way, she was seldom without a book in her hand, or some edifying discourse in her mouth, if there were opportunity. And abroad she was very weary of barren company, that spent the time in common chat, and dry discourses.

VII. She used good company practically and profitably, making use of what she heard for her own spiritual advantage. When I understood, out of her diary, that she wrote down some of my familiar discourses, with serious application to herself, it struck exceedingly deep to my heart, how much I have sinned all my days, since I undertook the person of a minister of Christ, by the slightness and unprofitableness of my discourse; and how careful ministers should be of their words, and how deliberately, wisely, and seriously they should speak about the things of God, and how diligently they should take all fit opportunities to that end, when we know not how silent hearers are affected with what we say. For aught we know, there may be some that will write down what we say in their books, or hearts, or both. And God and conscience write down all.

VIII. In her course of reading she was still laying in for use and practice. Her course was, when she read the Scriptures, to gather out passages, and sort and refer them to their several

uses, as some that were fit subjects for her meditations. Some for encouragement to prayer, and other duties. Promises suited to various conditions and wants, as her papers show.

And for other books, she would meddle with none but the sound and practical, and had no itch after the empty books, which make ostentation of novelty, and which opinionists are now so taken with ; nor did she like writing or preaching in envy and strife. And of good books she chose to read but few, and those very often over, that all might be well digested. Which is a course (for private Christians) that tends to avoid luxuriancy, and make them sincere, and solid, and established.

IX. She had the great blessing of a tender conscience. She did not slightly pass over small sins without penitent observation. Her diary records her trouble when causelessly she had neglected any ordinance ; or was hindered by rain, or small occasions : or if she had overslept herself, and lost a morning exercise in London, or came too late ; or if she were distracted in secret duty. And if she missed of a fast through misinformation and disappointments, and found not her heart duly sensible of the loss, that also she recorded. So did she her stirrings of anger, and her very angry looks, resolving to take more heed against them. Though all ought not to spend so much time in writing down their failings, yet all should watch and renew repentance.

X. She was very solicitous for the souls of her friends. As, for instance, her brothers-in-law, over whom she exercised a motherly care, instructing them, and watching over them, and telling them of miscarriages, and counselling them. Causing them to keep a constant course of reading the holy Scriptures, and meditating on it (as far as she could) : causing them to learn many chapters without book, and to read other good books in season ; earnestly praying for them in particular ; much desiring one or both should be ministers : and when her father-in-law appointed the eldest to go to France, she was much troubled for fear of his miscarriage among strangers, especially those of the Romish way.

XI. She was a serious mourner for the sins of the time and place she lived in.

XII. In sum, for strict, close, watchful, holy walking with God, even her husband professeth that she was a pattern to him. As I hinted before, she kept a daily account in writing (which is now to be seen, from the beginning of the year 1654), especially of these particulars :

1. Of the frame of her heart in every day's duty ; in meditation, prayer, hearing, reading, &c., whether lively or dull, &c.

2. Of those sins which she had especially to repent of, and watch against.

3. Of her resolutions and promises, and how she kept them.

4. Of all special providences to herself, husband, brothers, and others, and the improvement of them. As at the death of her son, who died with great sighs and groans, she recorded her sense of the special necessity of holy armour, and great preparation, for encounter, when her turn should come to be so removed to the everlasting habitation.

5. Of her returns of prayer, what answers, and grant of them she found.

6. Of the state of her soul upon examination ; how she found it, and what was the issue of her examination ; and in this it seems she was very exact and punctual. In which, though many times fears and doubtings did arise, yet hath she frequent records of the discovery of evidences, and comfortable assurance of sincerity. Sometimes when she hath heard sermons in London, that helped her in her search, and sometimes when she had been reading writings that tended that way, she recorded what evidences she found, and in what degree the discovery was ; if imperfect, resolving to take it up, and follow the search further. And if she had much joy, she received it with jealousy, and expectation of some humbling consequent. When any grace languished, she presently turned to some apt remedy. As, for instance, it is one of her notes, November, 1658, 'I found thoughts of eternity slight and strange, and ordinary employments very desirable ; at which I read Mr. B.'s Crucifixion, and was awakened to mortification and humiliation,' &c.

The last time that she had opportunity for this work, was two or three days before her delivery in childbearing, where she finally recorded the apprehensions she had, both of her bodily and spiritual state, in these words, 'Drawing near the time of my delivery, I am fallen into such weakness that my life is in hazard. I find some fears of death, but not very great, hoping, through grace, I die in the Lord.' I only mention these hints to show the method she used in her daily accounts. To those Christians that have full leisure, this course is good ; but I urge it not upon all. Those that have so great duties to take up that time, that they cannot spare so much to record their ordinary passages, such must remember what others record, and daily renew

repentance for their daily failings, and record only the extraordinary, observable, and more remarkable and memorable passages of their lives, lest they lose time for works of greater moment. But this excellent work of watchfulness must be performed by all.

And I think it was a considerable expression of her true wisdom, and care of her immortal soul, that when any extraordinary necessity required it, and she found such doubts, as of herself she was not able to deal with, she would go to some able, experienced minister to open her ease, and seek assistance, (as she did, more than once, to my dear and ancient friend, Mr. Cross, who, in full age, is since gone after her to Christ,) and, therefore, chose a minister in marriage, that he might be a ready assistant in such cases of necessity, as well as a continual help.

At last came that death to summon her soul away to Christ, for which she had so seriously been preparing, and which she oft called a 'dark entry to her Father's palace.' After the death of her children, when she seemed to be somewhat repaired, after her last delivery, a violent convulsion suddenly surprised her, which, in a few days, brought her to her end. Her understanding, by the fits, being at last debilitated, she finding it somewhat hard to speak sensibly, excused it; and said, 'I shall ere long speak another language,' which were the last words which she spake with a tongue of flesh, and laying speechless eighteen hours after, she departed, Aug. 17, 1659. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. xiv. 13.)

Our turn is coming. Shortly we shall also lay by flesh. This is our day of preparation; there is no preparing time but this. Did men but know the difference between the death of the holy and the unholy, which doth not appear to fleshly eyes, how speedily would they turn! how seriously would they meditate! how fervently would they pray! how carefully would they live! how constantly, painfully, and resolvedly would they labour! Did they well consider the difference between dying prepared and unprepared, and of what difficulty, and yet everlasting consequence, it is to die well; oh! then, what manner of persons would men be, in all manner of holy conversation and godliness, and all their lives would then be a continued preparation for death, as all their lives are hastening towards it.

And now I shall only desire you, for the right understanding of all that I have here said, and to prevent the cavils of blinded malice, to observe these three or four particulars.

1. That though I knew so much of her as easily make me believe the rest, upon so sure a testimony, and saw her diary, yet the most of this history of her life is the collection and observation of such faithful witnesses as had much better opportunity than I to know the secrets of her soul and life.

2. That it is no wonder if many, that knew her, perceived not all this by her that is here expressed; for that knowledge of our outward carriage at a distance will not tell our neighbours what we do in our closets, where God hath commanded us to shut our door upon us, that our Father which seeth in secret, may reward us openly. And many of the most humble and sincere servants of the Lord are so afraid of hypocrisy, and hate ostentation, that their justification and glory is only to be expected from the Searcher of hearts, and a few of their more intimate acquaintance; though this was not the case before us, the example described being more conspicuous.

3. That I over-passed the large expressions of her charity, which you may hear from the poor, and her intimate acquaintance, as I have done; that I may not grate upon the modesty of her surviving friends, who must participate in the commendations.

4. That it is the benefit of the history that is my principal end. Scripture itself is written much in history, that we may have matter of imitation before our eyes.

5. If any say that here is no mention of her faults, I answer, Though I had acquaintance with her, I knew them not, nor ever heard from any other so much as might enable me to accuse her, if I were her enemy. Yet I doubt not but she was imperfect, and had faults, though unknown to me. The example of holiness I have briefly proposed. They that would see examples of iniquity, may look abroad in the world, and find enough; I need not be the accuser of the saints to furnish them. And I think if they inquire here of any thing notable, they will be hard put to it to find enough to cover the accuser's shame.

6. It is the honour of Christ, and grace in his members, more than the honour of his servants, that I seek.

7. And I would not speak that in commendation of the living which I do of the dead, who are out of the reach of all

temptations of being lifted up with pride thereby ; unless it be such whose reputation the interest of Christ and the gospel commandeth me to vindicate.

8. Lastly, I am so far from lifting up one above the rest of the members of Christ by these commendations, and from abasing others, whose names I mention not, that I intend the honour of all in one, and think that in the substance I describe all saints in describing one. I am not about a popish work, of making a wonder of a saint, as of a phoenix, or some rare, unusual thing. Saints with them must be canonized, and their names put in the calendar ; and yet their blind malice tells the world that there are no such things as saints among us. But I rejoice in the many that I have communion with, and the many that have lately stepped before me into heaven, and are safe there, out of the reach of malice, and of sin, and all the enemies of their peace ; and have left me mourning, and yet rejoicing ; fearing, and yet hoping ; and, with some desires, looking after them here behind ; and the faster Christ calls away his chosen ones, whose graces were amiable in mine eyes, the more willing he maketh me to follow them, and to leave this world of darkness, confusion, wickedness, danger, vanity, and vexation, and to meet these precious souls in life, where we shall rejoice that we are past this howling wilderness, and shall for ever be with the Lord.

END OF THE SEVENTEENTH VOLUME.

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